The Report of the

Manitoba Child Care Task Force

March 1989

Manitoba

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Minister of
Family Services

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Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba, CANADA
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MAY 23 1989

I am pleased to enclose for your information a copy of the Report of the Manitoba Child Care Task Force.

As you know, when I appointed the Task Force last fall, I wanted to provide an opportunity for the community to indicate its views and needs with respect to child care. During the months that the Task Force held its hearings, it is clear that many Manitobans took advantage of this opportunity. I am sure that as you read through the Report you will recognize that a wide cross-section of issues has been integrated into the commentary and the recommendations.

The Report proposes a new framework of increased flexibility and parental choice within which the government can continue to develop the child care system in Manitoba. As we proceed to review and implement recommendations of the Child Care Task Force, I want to reiterate my commitment to families, children and care providers. The partnership which exists today will be strengthened in the future.

As well, I am pleased to appoint a Child Care Advisory Committee which will report to me on a variety of issues relating to child care. In particular, there were a number of Task Force recommendations which indicated that review should occur with the child care community. These issues will be referred directly to this newly formed committee to ensure that the dialogue which was established will continue in the future.

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I look forward to the continued development of child care services for children and families and hope that you will take the time to read carefully the enclosed document.

Yours truly,

Charlotte L. Oleson
Minister

The Report of the

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Chairperson's Introduction

The members of the Manitoba Child Care Task Force began our work in October of 1988. Since then, we have travelled hundreds of miles throughout the province, we have received hundreds of submissions, and we have spent more hundreds of hours in meetings and deliberations.

We began with differing views about many aspects of the child care field, and with differing levels of experience and expertise in the field and levels of knowledge of the various regions and communities in Manitoba.

We had, and on a personal level continue to have, areas of very significant disagreement. In that, as we say in the report, we are representative of the child care community as a whole in Canada.

In preparing this report and its recommendations, all of the members of the Task Force have strived to reach a consensus on a strategy for expansion, improvement and reform for child care services that can accommodate those differing views. It has not been easy: when there are honest and principled differences, accommodation is never easy.

We have not resolved all of the outstanding issues.

But I believe that the recommendations in our report provide the foundations for a practical and creative strategy for improvement in the child care services that Manitoba families need.

For this, my personal thanks go to all of the members of the Task Force. They took the importance of this evolving human service seriously enough to put their disagreements aside and work together for solutions that all could live with.

We would hope that those who read this report, and those throughout government and the child care community who will be responsible for implementing its recommendations, will do the same.

Linda MacNair
March 1989

An Introduction From the Task Force Members

The members of the Manitoba Child Care Task Force have spent the past five months in a detailed and intensive study of the child care system in Manitoba.

We have been struck by the dedication and competence of the professionals who provide care to Manitoba children throughout the system and those within the public service of Manitoba who are responsible for the administration of child care programs.

We believe that Manitoba's child care system serves the families of this province well, providing care of a quality and to a standard that is truly outstanding.

For this, immense credit belongs to the men and women of the professional child care community across this province, and to successive governments of Manitoba who have supported the evolution of this essential developmental community service.

The need for child care services, and the expectations families have of these services are both growing dramatically. We are fortunate to have an excellent system upon which to build as we strive to meet those needs and expectations.

We have identified more than 200 recommendations for measures that can contribute to the continued healthy evolution of the child care system in Manitoba, building on the foundations of achievement the child care community has already laid.

We would like to express our gratitude to the professional child care community of Manitoba for the insight, expertise and concern they brought to our deliberations, for the contributions they have already made to the well being of children and families across the province, and for the determination they have shown to make an excellent system even better to meet the needs of Manitoba.

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Introduction:

A View of the Future of Child Care in Manitoba — An Evolving Partnership

"The child care system is a partnership involving parents, the provincial government, the federal government, care providers, employers and the community as a whole."

The Manitoba Child Care Task Force believes that the evolving child care system in Manitoba is best seen as a partnership in which parents share their responsibilities for the care of their children.

Their immediate partners in this important activity are care providers, including professional child care workers, licensed family day care providers, or others with whom the parents may make arrangments.

Initially, the child care system grew up as a largely custodial service, responding to changes in life styles, including the growing number of single parent families and increased labour force participation by women. As our society has evolved, the expectations that families have of child care programs have changed.

Today the expectation is that, in addition to ensuring the safety of the child, child care programs will provide a range of learning and developmental opportunities, in partnership with parents.

In addition, child care is increasingly seen as an instrument that individual families and groups within the community can use to strengthen their cultures, help children overcome handicaps, or contribute to the survival of families in times of difficulty or stress.

But child care is not a private partnership between parents and the care providers. The needs of families imply a clear role, too, for governments at both the provincial and federal levels in creating a climate in which it is possible for the arrangements between parents and care providers to result in the highest possible quality of child care for all families who need it.

And as our child care system evolves, there is an increasing role in this partnership for the community at large, in contributing to the success of these arrangements for the care of children in Manitoba.

The Task Force believes that Manitoba's success in developing a child care system to meet the needs of all Manitobans will depend on a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities by all of the partners, and effective action to meet those responsibilities.

The Role of Parents in the Child Care Partnership

In this view of child care as a partnership, the Task Force believes that **parents should be viewed as the senior partner**

- it is the parents' right and responsibility to select and decide upon the care arrangements for their children
- it is the parents' responsibility to contribute towards the costs of appropriate child care, within the limits of their resources
- once care arrangements are made, it is the parents' right and responsibility to continue to participate actively with the care provider, helping to ensure the highest possible quality of care for each child
- to do this, parents must initiate and maintain an active partnership with the care provider, sharing information about the child and tne family that is relevant and necessary for good child care and the healthy development of the child.

The Role of Care Providers in the Child Care Partnership

It is essential that those who provide child care in Manitoba understand that their work must be seen as a partnership with the parents of the children they care for. **The goal of the child care arrangements that are evolving in our community is not to replace parents, but to augment their efforts to ensure the safe and healthy growth and development of their children.**

To play this role in the child care partnership, care providers must:

- have appropriate knowledge, skills and training to enable them to provide safe and healthy care and to contribute to the growth and development of each child
- respond to each individual child in a way that respects and reflects the particular needs and potentials of each child and the culture and values of the child's family
- initiate and maintain an active partnership with the parents, sharing information about the child and the family that is relevant and necessary for good child care and the healthy development of the child
- ensure that physical and spacial standards are met
- ensure that all aspects of the care provided for the child are of the highest possible quality and standard.

The Role of the Provincial Government in the Child Care Partnership

The child care system in Manitoba is in its infancy as an evolving community service. The provincial government must continue to play a pivotal role in the growth and development of a child care system that can meet the needs of all Manitoba families.

One goal of the province's participation should be to ensure that parents have realistic access to a range of safe and appropriate care arrangements and that they have access to the information necessary to make those choices.

To reach this goal, the province must:

- endorse the concept of child care as an evolving partnership in Manitoba
- support expansion in the child care system to meet the needs of Manitoba families
- contribute to the costs of child care so as to ensure that this service is truly accessible to all
- establish and enforce standards for the quality of all child care in Manitoba
- promote the highest possible quality of care by providing
    - appropriate training and educational opportunities to enable child care providers to develop the skills and expertise needed to ensure quality care for all children and to ensure adequate numbers of trained providers to meet the needs of Manitoba families
    - adequate resources to ensure that the child care system can attract and retain capable, dedicated trained care providers
    - ongoing training and support to assist child care programs to meet and exceed standards and to respond to evolving community needs
- promote the development of different kinds of child care to meet the diverse needs of Manitobans, responding to differences in geography, culture and demographic differences.

The Role of the Federal Government in the Child Care Partnership

To date, the federal government has participated along with the provinces in meeting the costs of some elements in the evolving child care system through the Canada Assistance Plan. Under that federal-provincial agreement, Ottawa contributed 50% of the costs of eligible services for those families who qualified under the CAP guidelines for "likelihood of need" regarding family income levels. Ottawa is also offering direct tax-delivered assistance to parents through the Child Care Exemption.

The federal government is in the process of reviewing its plans for a new approach to its participation in child care, offering some capital funding, and contributions to the costs of child care up to a maximum number of spaces in each province.

In the view of the Task Force, the federal government's role in the child care partnership should involve:

- appropriate financial support to promote and encourage the expansion of the child care system to meet real needs in all parts of Canada
- leadership in the development of national guidelines for quality care
- leadership in the development of training opportunities and resources
- leadership in the development of different forms of child care to respond to differing needs among Canadian families, and to geographic, cultural and demographic differences.

The Role of the Community in the Child Care Partnership

The success of the child care partnership can be greatest if the broad community plays a part in this evolving service. Professional associations of the child care community have an ongoing part to play as well in support of the child care system.

Local organizations like municipal councils and school boards, churches and other health and social service organizations can contribute to the development of effective child care. Increasingly employers can contribute to the healthy evolution and development of child care in Manitoba.

Their contributions should include:

- cooperation in the provision of facilities for child care programs
- enhanced linkages between child care programs and other services, i.e. between school age day care and ongoing school programs, delivery of health promotion services through child care programs, etc.
- providing information and support to assist parents and care providers in meeting their responsibilities within the child care partnership
- employer policies that accommodate the needs of families
- employer participation in the establishment of child care programs or assistance to employees to obtain access to such services
- professional linkages and resources for the child care community.

The Evolution of the Partnership

The child care partnership in Manitoba has evolved in response to irreversible changes in our society.

While many would prefer a situation in which parents could themselves care for their young children, economic and social reality makes that impossible in many cases.

The need, then, is for continued development of the means for parents to meet their responsibilities for the safe and healthy development of their children through arrangements with care providers who have appropriate training and ability.

That need will best be met through an evolving partnership in which parents, care providers, governments and the community at large all play a creative role.

The Report of the Manitoba Child Care Task Force includes a range of recommendations for actions by the Government of Manitoba that can promote and encourage the ongoing healthy evolution of the child care partnership in Manitoba.

Quality in Child Care for Manitobans

"Quality child care is care that meets the physical, emotional, intellectual and social needs of each individual child."

Nowhere has the concept of child care as a partnership evolved more rapidly and dramatically than in the understanding that parents and others have of the nature of quality care.

In days prior to the development of the child care system, child care was viewed as a custodial service. As social patterns changed, with more children spending more time in care arrangements, it has become clear that child care programs must do more than simply "mind" the child. These programs must also contribute actively to the safe and healthy development of the child.

The Task Force commends the evolution to date in Manitoba of the child care system, which addresses the developmental, health and safety needs of the child.

In any evolving system, analysis and evaluation leading to growth and improvement must be ongoing. All of the members of Manitoba's child care partnership share responsibility for ensuring the development of the highest quality of care for every Manitoba child.

The Criteria For Quality: the needs of the child

The criteria by which quality in child care should be evaluated reflect the needs each child has:

- for health and safety
- for emotional security
- for opportunities to make choices within a child centred program
- for opportunities to learn both information and skills
- for respect for his/her culture.

The Role of Parents in the Quality of Child Care

Parents have the ultimate responsibility for the quality of the care their children receive. In order to meet that responsibility

- it is the parents' right and responsibility to select and make choices as to the care their children will receive
- parents must have realistic access to child care programs if that right and responsibility are to be meaningful
- parents must have realistic alternatives if that right and responsibility are to be meaningful
- parents must have information as to the indicators of quality if they are to be able to evaluate and choose effectively
- parents must participate actively in a partnership with the care provider to ensure that the child's needs are being met
- parents must have the partnership/support of government in the establishment and enforcement of standards.

In the view of the Task Force, measures to enhance the ability of parents to meet these responsibilities and exercise these rights can make a very significant contribution to enhanced quality in child care in Manitoba.

The Role of Care Providers in the Quality of Child Care

As the individuals who are in direct contact with the child during the hours in which he/she is in care, **the care provider is the key determinant in the quality of child care**. In order to provide quality care:

- the provider must have appropriate knowledge, skills and training to identify and respond to the child's needs and to provide opportunities and support for the child as he/she learns and develops
- the provider must respond to each child, with sensitivity to the child's personality, culture and level of development
- the provider must enter into an active partnership with the parents sharing information that is relevant to the child's well-being and development
- the provider must ensure a safe and healthy environment
- the provider must be able to provide the child with continuity in both the kind of care program he/she receives and the individual providers with whom he/she will interact.

In the view of the Task Force, measures that support the efforts of care providers to meet these responsibilities can make a very significant contribution to the quality of child care in Manitoba.

The Role of the Provincial Government in the Quality of Child Care

The province is responsible for establishing a climate and context within which parents and care providers can discharge their responsibilities for the quality of the care Manitoba children receive.

To achieve that climate:

- the province must ensure that the system is affordable and accessible to Manitobans who need child care
- the province must set and enforce adequate standards with respect to the health and safety of all child care programs
- the province must ensure that both parents and providers are aware of those standards and the other key indicators of quality of care
- the province must ensure that there are sufficient child care services available to meet the needs of Manitoba families
- the province must promote the development of a range of child care alternatives to permit parents to make meaningful choices with respect to the care their children will receive
- the province must provide the educational and training opportunities resources that are needed to ensure that care providers are appropriately qualified and that there are sufficient trained people to meet the needs of Manitoba families
- the province must provide ongoing resources and assistance in establishing programs which address appropriately the developmental needs of the child
- the province must ensure that there are sufficient resources in the system to permit it to attract and retain trained and dedicated care providers.

The Role of the Federal Government in the Quality of Child Care

The federal government has a responsibility to contribute to the highest possible standards of quality in child care across Canada.

To discharge that responsibility:

- the federal government must provide financial assistance to support the development of child care to meet the actual needs that exist in all regions of Canada
- the federal government should establish national guidelines to encourage high quality care
- the federal government should provide financial and other assistance in the development and provision of appropriate training opportunities for child care workers and other care providers
- the federal government should encourage the exchange of information among the child care systems in the various parts of Canada with respect to quality and to alternative approaches to child care.

The Role of the Community in the Quality of Child Care

The community at large can make significant contributions to the overall quality of child care in Manitoba by:

- employer support for child care
- integration of other services with child care
- support for the development of professional organizations representing various sectors of the child care community
- participation along with parents on boards to provide specialized skills
- participation in program and program development
- provision or sharing of facilities.

The Task Force believes that, at this stage in the evolution of child care in Manitoba, there is significant potential for improved quality of child care through the strengthening of links between the community at large and this increasingly important human service.

The Quality of Child Care In Manitoba: an appraisal

As stated in our introduction, the members of the Task Force have been struck by the dedication and competence of the professionals who provide care to Manitoba children throughout the system and those within the public service of Manitoba who are responsible for the administration of child care programs.

We believe that Manitoba's child care system serves the families of this province well, providing care of a quality and to a standard that is truly outstanding.

For this, immense credit belongs to the men and women of the professional child care community across this province, and to successive governments of Manitoba who have supported the evolution of this essential developmental community service.

The need for child care services, and the expectations families have of these services are both growing dramatically. We are fortunate to have an excellent system upon which to build as we strive to meet those needs and expectations.

The professional child care community and others have helped us identify a number of areas in which there is potential for ongoing improvement in the already excellent quality of service provided by the child care system in Manitoba.

There is potential for improvement through more effective efforts to support parents by providing more information and assistance parents can use in making choices and participating responsibly in the care their children receive.

There is potential for enhancement through more effective communication and rigorous enforcement of provincial standards, through expansions in the province's ability to provide assistance to child care programs.

Expansion in the child care system, including the development of a wide range of different kinds of child care programs, can provide families with more alternatives. The development of increasing capabilities within the system to respond to children with special needs, to reflect and strengthen Manitoba's multicultural reality, to meet particular seasonal or other varied needs that families in Manitoba have can all lead to enhanced quality in the system as a whole.

The Task Force also believes that two main factors threaten the province's ability to maintain and enhance the current high quality of care in child care in Manitoba. These are:

- an inadequate number of licensed child care spaces to meet the needs of Manitoba families; the fact that the child care system provides excellent quality care to those who are in it is of no benefit to the hundreds of Manitoba families who are unable to find licensed child care services
- inadequate compensation and recognition of child care workers and other care providers; this threatens the ability of the child care system to attract and retain the trained and dedicated people who are needed to provide child care as a high quality developmental human service in Manitoba.

Discussion and Detailed Recommendations

The Risk to Quality

The ability of the child care system to attract and retain trained and dedicated child care workers and other care providers is seriously at risk in Manitoba today. The main factors contributing to this risk are:

- **inadequate salaries**: a fully qualified child care worker (one who has completed a minimum of 20 months of post-secondary training) earns approximately $16,000 per year
- **inadequate financial incentives/recognition for training and experience**: there is little acknowledgement in the salary system of additional training or experience
- **inadequate opportunities for additional development or specialization**: although needs have been identified for specialists to assist in designing and providing care to children with special needs and for particular expertise related to the multicultural nature of Manitoba society, there is limited appropriate training available and few positions within the system to employ such specialists effectively
- a perception that there is **inadequate recognition** by parents and the community of the importance of the child care worker's job.

If the quality of child care in Manitoba is to be maintained at its current high levels, and if quality is to improve through the evolving child care partnership in Manitoba, it is essential that government move immediately, adopting a multi-faceted strategy to address these problems.

Training and Education

The presence of a sufficient number of trained staff is essential to maintenance of quality in the child care system. Government's training and education strategy for child care should have as its primary goal ensuring that adequate numbers of qualified Child Care Workers (CCWII's and CCWIII's) are available in all parts of the province to staff the growing child care system of Manitoba at levels necessary to ensure quality of care.

Recommendation 1

That the Departments of Education and Community Services develop and implement a long term joint strategy to meet the educational needs of the child care system.

The ongoing expansion and evolution of child care services in Manitoba will mean that the field of child care education and the careers to which this education can lead will both expand. It is important that government policies reflect these facts.

Recommendation 2

That the government, as a matter of policy, support the development and evolution of child care training at the post-secondary level.

This support should include efforts to encourage people to enter the child care field, and to develop the training resources necessary to the evolution of specialist roles within the child care profession. Most trained child care workers in Manitoba are graduates of the Diploma Program offered at the community college level. The quality of the training programs already developed and the decentralized nature of the community college system make these institutions an invaluable training resource for the child care field.

Recommendation 3

That Assiniboine Community College and Red River Community College have sufficient funding available to expand the development and delivery of child care training in Manitoba to meet the increased demand for qualified Child Care Workers.

Recommendation 4

That sufficient funding be made available to Keewatin Community College, St. Boniface Community College and Yellowquill College to permit them to address the training needs of specific populations such as French, Aboriginal and northern communities, and that outreach programs be developed from these institutions.

The Task Force is strongly of the view that training recognized for classification above the level of Child Care Worker I should take place at the post-secondary level. There are some child care education programs offered at the secondary level. These courses can serve as a useful prelude to studies in the post-secondary diploma program, but they are not sufficient in scope to allow classification beyond CCWI.

Recommendation 5

That Manitoba maintain the current policy of accepting Technical Vocational School and Sturgeon Creek Regional Secondary School child care credits in the Red River Community College child care program.

Recommendation 6

That the province support Red River Community College's initiative in strengthening infant care, school age and special needs elements in the basic child care curriculum.

Recommendation 7

That the province support increased cross-cultural components in all child care training curriculum.

It has been noted that some of the courses in the Child Care Diploma curriculum are very specific to the operation of not-for-profit child care centres. While this is beneficial for most students, those whose career plans lie in the commercial sector or in family day care may prefer to choose other options if they are aware of the course focus.

Recommendation 8

That, where the content of a child care training course focuses heavily on management in the not-for-profit sector, education institutions be urged to include this focus in published course descriptions.

Recommendation 9

That admission requirements and the selection process be reviewed to ensure appropriate evaluation of the qualifications of applicants entering child care training.

Training and Education in the child care field in Manitoba is currently coordinated through the Child Care Education Program Approval Committee (CCEPAC). The Task Force strongly endorses and supports the role of CCEPAC in this function and believes it can play a wider role as child care education in Manitoba is more fully developed.

Recommendation 10

That CCEPAC's role be expanded to include the approval of all child care training in Manitoba, providing a mechanism for coordination of all existing and new child care training activities in the province.

Because child care is an evolving service, the Task Force believes that there is a need for the development of further training and education programs beyond the diploma level. Two universities have developed advanced studies programs in child care, and are currently awaiting funding. We see the development and integration of undergraduate and post-graduate programs as necessary to provide the continuum needed to address the education needs of the child care system in Manitoba.

Recommendation 11

That the province pursue a broad child care education strategy including such options as diploma programs, and university undergraduate and postgraduate degrees to address the evolving need for workers, educators, researchers and specialists in the child care field.

Recommendation 12

That the province ensure that diploma/certificate courses being developed are eligible for credit in Degree courses.

Recommendation 13

That funding be provided for degree programs in child care currently proposed by the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg.

There is also a need for the development and approval of inter-disciplinary specialization courses in such areas as special needs, infant care and school age training.

These programs will address identified needs in the system, and will contribute to broader career options for those entering the child care field. This will strengthen the ability of the field to attract and retain appropriate numbers of trained people.

Recommendation 14

That further inter-disciplinary specialized certificate courses at the post-diploma level be developed, approved by CCEPAC and implemented including:

- ***special needs***
- ***infant care***
- ***school age***

and that such approved courses be recognized for CCWIII classification.

Recommendation 15

That community colleges review their admission policies with a view to enabling those CCWII's who obtained classification with other than diploma training to be admitted into specialized certificate courses.

The Task Force recognizes that many people have some formal or informal training or previous experience in child care or related fields. Red River Community College recognizes this experience and allows "challenge for credit" in a number of first year courses. We believe such recognition can make this training more accessible to many Manitobans.

Recommendation 16

That Red River Community College be funded to develop and implement a "challenge for credit" system for selected second year courses toward a diploma in child care.

The Task Force believes that the concept of **competency based assessment** for care providers is a sound and and realistic element within the continuum of training and education required to support healthy growth of child care services in Manitoba. Currently, there is a shortage of staff at the Child Day Care Office to administer this assessment in a timely manner.

This has resulted in a backlog of people awaiting assessment and acts as a barrier to this training.

Recommendation 17

That the Child Day Care Office be funded to hire additional staff necessary to alleviate the backlog of applicants to the competency based assessment program and to continue to staff this program at a level that will allow this assessment to be a realistic option for child care workers.

There are a number of CCWII's in the child care system who were centre Directors prior to the change in regulations requiring directors to be CCWIII's. They were given five years to receive the training to become CCWIII's but a limited number have been unable to receive this training by the deadline.

Recommendation 18

That CCWII's who were Directors prior to the change in regulations should receive individual extensions based on the development of an education path and demonstrated compliance. This plan should be reviewed with the Child Day Care Office on an annual basis.

Currently directors of school age programs are required to be CCWII's. The Task Force believes that Directors of school age programs should be classified at the CCWIII level..

Recommendation 19

That Directors of School Age centres be required to be CCWIII's.

Recommendation 20

That existing Directors of school age programs be given time to upgrade by developing individual education plans and demonstrating progress on an annual basis, and that the province provide opportunities for upgrading for directors of school age programs through summer block programs.

Recommendation 21

That the appeal function of the Qualifications Review Board be maintained, with further appointments to be made to the Board from representatives of universities, community colleges and CCEPAC.

There are also significant opportunities to enhance quality in the Family Day Care sector through the provision of additional training opportunities.

At present, no formal training is required for licensed Family Day Care Providers, although it is recognized that training can contribute directly to quality in child care. The nature of the Family Day Care model is such that it is difficult for providers to access traditional training models. At present there is a lack of appropriate training opportunities.

Recommendation 22

That the province support the concept of additional training support for family day care by making training available and encouraging innovative training options.

Recommendation 23

That the province provide ongoing support and continuing funding for the Family Day Care training program that was delivered through New Careers.

Recommendation 24

That family day care training programs and resources be expanded and made available in a form suitable for use in northern and rural communities.

Recommendation 25

That family day care providers be permitted to do competency based assessment in their own homes — where the service will be delivered.

Public Education

The Task Force also believes there is a need for enhanced public education to support the healthy development of child care services in Manitoba.

In our hearings throughout Manitoba, we were told that there is a lack of information available to the public about the child care system, and a general lack of awareness of where to obtain such information as does exist.

Recommendation 26

That information be actively disseminated to the public concerning:

- ***child care quality***
- ***licensing and regulations***
- ***funding and subsidies***
- ***family day care homes***
- ***parents rights and responsibilities***

and that such information be disseminated through libraries, community centres, public health nurses and home economists.

Recommendation 27

That the government "Citizens' Inquiry Service" be made fully aware of departments that can respond to enquiries about child care.

Recommendation 28

That a guide booklet for potential child care providers be developed as part of government's small business development activities.

Standards and Regulations

Manitoba has in place a comprehensive system of regulations and standards which have often been emulated by other provinces. The Task Force endorses these regulations and standards currently in place in Manitoba which form the basis for child care as a quality developmental service, and address the programming needs, safety and health of the children in care.

The province has a fundamental responsibility to ensure the standard of quality that exists in Manitoba by enforcing the current regulations and by supporting the Child Day Care Office in the application of those regulations. There must be political support if the Child Day Care Office is to fulfill its mandate of enforcing quality standard regulations.

As well, as part of the partnership, parents and providers need to be well informed of the detail and nature of the regulations and their purposes.

Parents have the responsibility to be ever mindful of these regulations as they apply to their children in care, and the right to demand that the regulations be enforced. Providers have a professional obligation to ensure the integrity of the system and its application.

Recommendation 29

That the current regulations and standards of child care be maintained and enhanced.

Recommendation 30

That parents be provided with resources and materials that will enable them to participate in ensuring the regulations are met, both individually and as members of centre boards and advisory committees.

Recommendation 31

That the province ensure that all care providers be supplied with practical materials explaining the regulations and their intentions, and be encouraged to take the initiative and responsibility for obtaining more information and responding to events that are relevant to the regulations and the standards the province is striving to achieve.

Recommendation 32

That the province explicitly encourage networking and communications among all forms of child care — nursery, centres, family day care, etc. to ensure the greatest possible awareness of standards and their purposes.

Centre Boards of Directors

The largest part of the child care centre system in Manitoba is made up of not-for-profit organizations administered by boards of directors. This system has developed and matured and, for the most part, works well. There is, however, room for growth and improvement in this critical part of the child care system.

The Task Force believes that parents must play the key role in the child care partnership, participating actively to ensure quality care for the child. One avenue for effective participation is through parent involvement in this already established system of centre boards of directors.

For their part, caregivers have a responsibility to encourage and welcome parental involvement, especially on boards of directors.

Centre boards can also be a mechanism through which the community as a whole can contribute to the quality care of children. The Task Force is in favour of broad community participation, involving people with a variety of backgrounds and expertise, on centre boards of directors.

We believe that the province should support this involvement of parents and the community, recognizing the autonomy of centre boards and respecting the right of parents and the community to make independent decisions at the board level.

In our view, however, it is important that parents and other board members, in addition to being genuinely concerned with the well being of the children, must have appropriate skills and knowledge to make an effective contribution to the operations of child care programs in Manitoba.

Recommendation 33

That the province develop a more comprehensive orientation and training program to assist members of centre boards and especially members of executives to understand their roles and to learn management skills. Training should reflect the stage of development at which the care programs are functioning. Training could be achieved through such methods as:

- ***workshops***
- ***resource packages***
- ***videos***

and boards should be made aware of their availability.

Recommendation 34

That Child Day Care Office coordinators be involved in the delivery of board training to centres, as their knowledge of individual centres can permit the program to be tailored to meet individual needs.

Recommendation 35

That a list of community resources which could provide training and development workshops, be compiled and distributed to boards, and that funding be made available to centres to purchase such training.

Recommendation 36

That adequate funding be made available to enable day care centres and boards to contract consultants to enhance the quality of child care, effectiveness of the board of directors or the capabilities of the administration system.

Recommendation 37

That more comprehensive training for working with a Board of Directors be included in the Day Care Management Training Course.

Recommendation 38

That the minimum participation of parents on the Board of Directors of a day care centre be increased from the current level of 20% to 50%.

All commercial child care centres in Manitoba have Parent Advisory Committees. The Task Force believes that measures to enhance the involvement of these committees in the various care programs can contribute to enhanced quality.

Recommendation 39

That the province develop meeting agendas and other resource materials for Parent Advisory Committees to use in increasing their involvement in the care programs of commercial centres.

Licensing

The current licensing system in Manitoba makes licensing an option for many care providers in the informal sector. The Task Force believes that licensing is a method to ensure quality and the maintenance of standards in child care.

Recommendation 40

That the province adopt a policy of encouraging licensing with built-in financial and program support incentives, including provision of materials to enhance parental involvement.

The Task Force is also concerned about regulations and standards relating to the licensing and operations of Family Day Care Programs. These concerns are addressed in the "Family Day Care" section of this report.

Child care is an emerging profession. One of the most powerful forces for enhanced and — over time — maintained quality of care is the encouragement of the development of a "professional ethos", including an explicit sense of vocation and participation by all members of the profession in the enhancement of standards among the people who are building this profession.

In this regard, the Task Force believes that the title "Child Care Worker" does not adequately reflect the professionalism, education or responsibilities with which people in the child care field must address their duties.

Such associations as the Manitoba Child Care Association play a large role in supporting the positive movement of the child care system toward professionalism by enhancing opportunities for networking, providing research development and consulting services and encouraging self-monitoring and high standards.

Recommendation 41

That the professional associations representing licensed child care facilities determine a title for people in the child care field that more accurately reflects their professionalism and develop systems for quality accreditation of facilities.

The effectiveness of provincial standards and regulation can be greatest only if all members of the child care system, including parents and care providers, are aware of the standards and have access to the information and resources needed to evaluate the adequacy of care programs.

Recommendation 42

That the province conduct a public education/awareness program to ensure that parents are aware of the minimum standards required for child care in Manitoba.

Recommendation 43

That the province provide suitable resource materials on health, nutrition, safety and early childhood education to parents and unlicensed care providers.

Staffing Ratios

The proportion of total staff who are trained and the ratio of staff to children in child care programs are key quality determinants.

Recommendation 44

That the province maintain the standard that two-thirds of staff in child care programs must be qualified as CCWII's and CCWIII's.

To maintain this standard, it will be necessary for government to provide sufficient funding to expand educational opportunities in the child care field, with special emphasis on Aboriginal, French and rural needs, so that there will be sufficient trained child care workers and care providers to meet the demands of an expanding child care system.

Exemptions to trained staff ratios should be permitted only at the discretion of the Child Day Care Office.

Many in the child care community believe that lower child to staff ratios are the ideal. The Task Force recognizes the very large impact that reduced ratios have on the unit cost of child care services, but we do believe the system could benefit from a lowering of ratios, particularly in the infant area. It was suggested that changes to lower ratios to 1:3 for infants, 1:6 for preschoolers, and 1:10 for school age would be beneficial.

In addition, there is some concern that the category "preschool" may be too broad. There was support for the revision of categories as follows:

- infant — 0 to 18 months
- toddler — 18 to 30 months
- preschool — 30 months and up.

Recommendation 45

That the province, with developmental specialists and members of the child care community, evaluate the desirability of dividing the "infant" and "preschool" age category into three age-appropriate divisions.

The Child Day Care Office

The Child Day Care Office provides an essential resource to the child care system across Manitoba. The Task Force recognizes and supports this role. Many of those who appeared before the Task Force, however, requested that the Child Day Care Office have an expanded role in providing consulting and problem-solving assistance to care providers, and expanded resources to discharge that role.

Recommendation 46

That additional staff be hired at the Child Day Care Office to allow for coordinator case loads of 1 coordinator to each 35 centres.

Recommendation 47

That the Child Day Care Office role be expanded, with additional staff where necessary, and with the emphasis on developing consulting and problem solving capabilities in addition to the Child Day Care Office's regulation and monitoring activities.

There was also a strong feeling that the Child Day Care Office could actively promote idea sharing and problem solving among care providers in the child care system.

Recommendation 48

That both the Child Day Care Office and professional associations continue to arrange meetings and exchanges among care providers including day care centres, family day care providers and nursery schools to encourage networking and information sharing.

Recommendation 49

That both the Child Day Care Office and professional associations continue to encourage the development of links between child care centres and family day care providers for program development and resource sharing purposes.

Recommendation 50

That the Child Day Care Office, with additional staff where necessary, establish a resource/referral service to the community to:

- ***assist parents to find care providers/centres in their area***
- ***assist parents in assessing quality care and facility***

Such a service could tie into toy lending libraries, etc., and otherwise act as a valuable asset tothe community.

Recommendation 51

That the Child Day Care Office develop a library of child care literature and resources to be made available to all people involved in the child care community in Manitoba.

The Task Force is also concerned that the working relationship between the Child Day Care Office and the policy/political levels of government is in need of strengthening. We would hope that both will be involved in the development of responses to this report and that, through this process, greater trust and more effective working relationships can be established.

The officials in the Child Day Care Office and others throughout the child care community believe that the overall regulations established for child care should be reviewed on a regular basis, with the results of these reviews being communicated to all care providers.

Recommendation 52

That, as a matter of policy, provincial regulations for child care be reviewed at least every five years, in consultation with representatives from all sectors of the child care community.

Health and Safety

The Task Force believes that preventative health actions in the child care system can be made more effective through the development of clear health records that will be available system-wide.

Recommendation 53

That a child's immunization status must be included in the child's information records on file at the day care centre or home.

Recommendation 54

That an annual medical checkup of all care providers be required as a condition of licensing.

We also note that there are inconsistencies in enforcement with respect to fire safety in child care programs.

Recommendation 55

That the Child Day Care Office and the office of the Fire Commissioner cooperate in the development of a standard enforcement practice, and that a clear statement of this policy be distributed to all care providers.

The Distribution of Spaces

It became very apparent to the Task Force that there is much confusion in the child care community as to how funding for additional spaces is allocated. In the absence of a clearly articulated policy and criteria, allocation decisions may appear to be unfair or raise suspicions of political manipulation.

Recommendation 56

That a clear set of criteria for the allocation of funding for additional child care spaces be established and communicated clearly throughout the child care community.

Recommendation 57

That a committee representing the child care community and the community at large be established to make specific decisions on distribution of funding for child care spaces based on needs, ability of the applicant to administer the program and application, within the general focus guidelines set by the provincial government .

The Task Force is also of the view that, where additional spaces are being funded, it will often be most cost-efficient to increase spaces in existing facilities which have the physical space and have shown a need and desire to expand.

Recommendation 58

That, all things being equal, priority in determining the location of newly funded spaces be given to existing centres.

Types of Care

Because of the current composition of the child care system, the main focus of this report has been on full time preschool care. It is evident, however, that there are equally serious concerns among parents, providers and educators regarding care of infants and school age children.

Infant Care

The Task Force recognizes that the ideal situation would be one in which all parents were able to be at home with their young infants. Not all are.

Here again, the provision of appropriate care becomes a partnership in which employers and the federal and provincial governments can each play a role in supporting parents in their responsibility for ensuring that their children receive appropriate care.

Recommendation 59

That the federal and provincial governments cooperate with employers and parents to develop options such as parental leaves of absence, "pension" type funds young people can contribute to in order to provide income during such leaves and others to support parents in addressing the care needs of very young children.

Two of the most important factors in the quality of care provided infants are:

- the consistent presence of the same caregiver; and
- a nurturing environment.

The Task Force believes that, with close attention to these key factors, quality child care can be provided in all types of settings. We do believe, however, that family day care homes are an especially good option for providing the kind of care infants need.

Recommendation 60

That family day care homes be encouraged as an infant care option, with a maximum of three infants permitted per home.

There is a severe shortage of infant care spaces in Manitoba — regardless of the setting. The Task Force agrees it is essential that this shortage be addressed.

Recommendation 61

That the government consider the expansion of licensed, funded infant care spaces as a priority.

Recommendation 62

That the infant care grants for child care centres and homes be reviewed to ensure that the real and increasing costs of this essential service are adequately addressed.

Recommendation 63

That the Child Child Day Care Office and Department of Health reassess space requirements for infant care.

School Age Care

Another area where parents and the child care community identified a severe lack of needed services was in school age care.

The Task Force supports the current Child Welfare Act which protects children under the age of 12 years, and recognizes the serious problems faced by parents whose young children are in school and come home before their parents can.

School age care, too, is a partnership, with government, parents and schools all having important roles to play.

The members of the Task Force emphasize their view that schools have a major responsibility to participate in the general care of school age children. Such care enhances their role in the community and has a beneficial impact on school programs by ensuring that children are not fearful or subject to stress (at having to be home alone) and that their nutritional needs are met.

Recommendation 64

That the expansion of child care programs for school age children be a priority.

Recommendation 65

That schools be strongly encouraged to play a major cooperative role in the expansion of school age child care programs.

Recommendation 66

That where the capitalization of child care spaces occurs in schools, and where a need is determined for a school age program, school age programs be given priority over other types of care.

The capital agreement between the Department of Community Services and the Department of Education gives preschool child care in schools adequate physical space but presumes when designating spaces to school age programs that they will have access to school facilities. In fact, this does not always happen.

Recommendation 67

That, where space for school age programs is capitalized into schools, long term agreements be negotiated to guarantee the child care program's access to school facilities. Where such agreements cannot be made, the Task Force recommends that adequate space for school age programs be incorporated into school construction plans.

Recommendation 68

That the province review and designate clear guidelines for space in schools to be assigned to school age care.

The Task Force believes that the care of school age children is another area where family day care homes can provide a much-needed service, with the advantage of being able to license homes close to schools.

Recommendation 69

That expansion of school age child care spaces be encouraged in the family day care home sector.

Appropriate fees and grants relating to school age child care are discussed in the funding section of this report.

Nursery Schools

The Task Force recognizes that nursery schools provide an important option in the continuum of quality care for children in Manitoba.

Although nursery schools are considered part of the child care system, they address the needs of a large group of families who do not use the full time system. Nursery schools are a source of support for stay-at-home parents, a resource for special needs children and a source of socialization and respite care.

Nursery school programs can also be innovative and flexible to answer the needs for seasonal and extended hour care in rural areas.

At the present time, only those nursery school programs in existence prior to 1978 are being funded. The Task Force believes this is inequitable.

Recommendation 70

That complete nursery school funding be extended to all licensed not-for-profit nursery schools, with salary enhancement grants being incorporated into the maintenance grant funding over the next three years.

Recommendation 71

That independent nursery schools be extended salary support grants in the amount of $3,300 (pro-rated), with conditions relating to salary levels, payroll audit, subsidized children and expansions as for the commercial sector's involvement in the full time child care system.

The Task Force realizes, however, that extending full funding to nursery schools, while desirable, is a serious commitment of resources. In light of some of the more pressing funding needs of the child care system, the government may wish to take an interim measure.

Recommendation 72

That, as an interim measure:

- ***the current funding to nursery schools be discontinued, and that all not-for-profit nursery schools receive instead a support grant based on $4,000 per year for an average sized program, pro-rated to address varying nursery school sizes; and***
- ***independent nursery schools be extended a support grant calculated on a formula that reflects the proportion of salary grants to full funding in the full time child care system, with the same conditions to apply as apply to such funding to independents in the full time system.***

The Task Force recognizes that these measures would take funding from some nursery schools that were previously funded, but we believe it does address inequities that exist in the current funding system.

Within the partnership of government, care providers and parents, the Task Force believes that each partner has responsibilities. If government provides funding and nursery schools address quality of care, it is reasonable that parents should accept their obligations as well.

Recommendation 73

That the government establish a set fee for services in not-for-profit nursery schools, and that nursery schools be required to charge full fees in order to receive government funding.

Recommendation 74

That nursery schools and school age child care centres be encouraged to combine programs where possible for the more effective use of resources.

Capitalization of Spaces in Schools/Government Buildings

The Task Force feels that the concept of including child care facilities within schools or other government buildings has merit. However, we are unable to make concrete recommendations on the financial feasibility of construction of care spaces in schools as we have no basis for comparison of costs.

In general, the child care community also supported this concept, but identified a number of potential problems including:

- uncertain relationships between the school and the child care program
- lack of accessibility to school facilities
- need for increased input from the child care community when space is being planned.

Recommendation 75

That a thorough cost analysis be done to determine the financial feasibility of the current policy of capitalizing child care facilities into new and renovated schools.

Recommendation 76

That members of the child care community, and especially those individuals who would be involved in the administration of the program, be consulted at the "needs analysis" stage in the planning of school construction or renovation to ensure adequate and suitable space is included in the plan.

Recommendation 77

That if including child care space in new and renovated construction is determined to be financially feasible, this practise be continued in schools, government and community buildings where a need for such space has been identified.

Recommendation 78

That the federal government be encouraged to participate in cost-sharing programs to establish child care centres in schools, government and community buildings.

Recommendation 79

That child care centres be funded through their maintenance grants to purchase resources from the community, such as legal services, to assist in negotiating lease agreements with school divisions.

Recommendation 80

That schools and school divisions be encouraged to recognize the value of incorporating child care into a school facility and be urged to cooperate fully in making facilities available to the child care program.

Four Key Characteristics of a Quality Child Care System: Adaptability, Diversity, Flexibility and Options

Adaptability — For Children With Special Needs

Child care services can make an invaluable contribution to families whose children have special physical, mental or psychological needs.

Such children have the same rights as other children:

- the right to care that meets their basic needs for health, safety and security
- the right to care that responds to their emotional and developmental needs
- the right to be treated, so far as is fair and possible, in the same manner as other children.

Providing this care requires special training, additional resources and understanding on the part of care providers.

Currently the province provides:

- special needs grants — for the purchase of special equipment, i.e. appropriate toys for a blind child
- additional funding
- consulting support and access to funds for specialized training.

The goal is to integrate children with special needs into the child care system so far as that is possible. The strategy that is in place appears sound, and the integration effort is working.

The Task Force endorses the recent addition of a child development consultant who is providing leadership and initiative in the development and coordination of care to children with special needs throughout the child care system.

Recommendation 81

That the role of the Child Day Care Office's Child Development Consultant be expanded with additional staff as needed.

The Task Force does believe, however, that there are some measures that could enhance the system's ability to adapt to the needs of these children.

Recommendation 82

That the definition of "special needs" be broadened to provide support for the care of children with emotional and social problems as well as those with other handicaps.

There is also a need for a more systematic approach to special needs training including both practical training and more sophisticated training for those involved in delivering specialized care.

There are significant community resources available through such agencies and organizations as the Association For Community Living, the Canadian Mental Health Association, the CNIB and others.

Recommendation 83

That the province develop an overall training strategy for special needs care providers including:

- ***workshops on the care of various special needs groups***
- ***advanced special needs training***
- ***community based training consultants who can give training on site***
- ***special needs training support for Family Day Care Providers.***

Recommendation 84

That community organizations and professionals in the special needs field be involved in the development and delivery of training, and in the provision of support to child care programs in the care of children with special needs.

There is concern that child care for children with special needs is developing more slowly in rural and remote areas where there is often a general shortage of licensed child care services. The Task Force believes that Family Day Care Providers can help meet this need if there are appropriate training and supports provided.

Recommendation 85

That the province develop a specific integration strategy for Family Day Care services including:

- ***the provision of training***
- ***appropriate funding or financial arrangements.***

One area that deserves special concern is that of child abuse. Care providers have clearly demonstrated that they are versed in the indicators of child abuse and the procedures to be followed in reporting abuse.

There is a sense, however, that where providers are able to identify abused children, there is a lack of a clear mechanism to ensure the situation is addressed and appropriate follow-up provided for the child.

Recommendation 86

That the province ensure that there are professionals available and systems in place in both urban and rural areas to address immediately the needs of abused children.

Recommendation 87

That the province ensure that the care provider is involved in the treatment process in the case of abused children.

Diversity — To Reflect the Cultural Diversity of Manitoba

Manitoba is a culturally diverse province. The Task Force believes that child care should reflect the multicultural nature of the province.

The Aboriginal people are a significant proportion of Manitoba's population and their needs for child care are addressed in a section of this report specific to that purpose.

The Task Force recognizes the unique needs and status of the French community in Manitoba. Currently, there is a lack of child care specific to the French culture and language, as well as a lack of resources and training in support of this system.

Recommendation 88

That funding be made available to St. Boniface College to develop and implement a child care worker diploma program.

Recommendation 89

That the province ensure that there are sufficient staff members in the Child Day Care Office who are fluently bilingual to serve the needs of the French community.

Recommendation 90

That where the population in a region warrants, a bilingual coordinator be available to handle licensing, monitoring and resource responsibility.

Recommendation 91

That the province ensure that manuals and other essential materials be made available in French.

Recommendation 92

That the province provide support, with additional staff as needed, to the French community in the establishment of culturally specific child care programs and resources.

Manitoba has become the home for a large immigrant population, representing a wide diversity in language and culture. These immigrant families deserve special assistance in their struggle to establish themselves in this province.

Recommendation 93

That child care centres strive for a multicultural element in child care staffing.

Recommendation 94

That parents and multicultural community groups be encouraged to participate in the development of programs and resources reflecting the various cultures of Manitoba.

Recommendation 95

That the province continue to expand its support to community groups in the establishment of culturally specific child care programs.

Recommendation 96

That the province develop and provide training resources to support the development of cultural diversity in the child care system.

Recommendation 97

That the province attempt to recruit family day care providers who speak languages other than English, and encourage the provision of English as a Second Language training.

Flexibility — To Respond to the Differing Needs of Manitoba Families

Families should have access to child care services at times and in locations that are responsive to their needs. The great majority of child care services are provided at the times during which most people work — from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm.

The ideal is for the system to be flexible enough to respond to the child care needs of families who have different time requirements, such as shift workers, part time, occasional and seasonal workers.

The ideal is for parents to have a choice among alternative care programs that all meet provincial standards and have a clear understanding of the options.

The location of child care programs is not always convenient to the family or conducive to the overall interests of the child. When care is not available close to the child's house, it can lead to time-consuming travel and accessibility becomes a major problem.

The ideal is for care options to be available in locations that are convenient for Manitoba families.

Recommendation 98

That the province work with parents and care providers to ensure that a range of quality care choices are available and accessible.

Recommendation 99

That the province support and encourage, through an initiative fund, the development and testing of innovative care models to respond to differing family needs or desires.

Part-time and Other Care

The nature of employment in Manitoba is changing with many more flexible arrangements being promoted, i.e. job-sharing, contracting, etc. While this can have a positive impact on employees and families, it poses problems for those parents seeking to find appropriate child care compatible with their work schedules.

In addition, the mobility of families today has resulted in many parents with young children living far away from extended family members who would otherwise share in the provision of part time, occasional, drop-in and emergency care.

To date, the child care system has left these needs largely unaddressed.

The Task Force also heard concerns about the lack of care available for children of parents working shift-work hours, or children of parents in jobs such as flight attendants whose work involves having to be absent for a number of days at a time.

Child care needs are often very specific to particular locations or groups of people. The Task Force feels that members of the child care community, coordinators, directors, care providers and others are best qualified to develop the kinds of flexible programs that are needed, including provision for funding or licensing of individuals to act as Child Minders, "granny contingent" strategies, and in-home emergency caregivers.

The Task Force challenges the child care community and the community at large to develop innovative ideas to address these needs.

Recommendation 100

That an initiatives fund be established to encourage the development and piloting of innovative child care programs which address the need for part-time and other options care.

Worksite Child Care

The Task Force regards worksite child care as a viable option for child care. Children and parents benefit from the opportunity for closer contact during the day, increased feeling of control and security for parents, and the convenience of accessible care.

Recent studies show that worksite child care can result in reduced absenteeism and a more relaxed and positive attitude among employees, with the resulting potential for increased productivity.

The members of the Task Force feel that the most appropriate and beneficial way to encourage the establishment of worksite child care is to offer employers incentives to do so. Such incentive programs should be time limited, since we believe the worksite child care concept should eventually be adopted on its own merits as employers and parents recognize its value.

Recommendation 101

That the federal government, the provincial government, with input from parents and employers confer to develop a suitable incentive policy to encourage the establishment of worksite child care spaces, and these incentives be available for a limited number of years.

Recommendation 102

That funding other than these incentives be extended only as part of the regular child care funding system but that parties applying for funding be given priority, allowing for start-up grants "up front".

Recommendation 103

That priority child care funding be extended to worksite child care only where clear long term employer commitment and support has been secured, and where parents have clearly demonstrated their need and support for the program.

Options — For the Days Children Are Sick

The Task Force believes that children need to be in the care of their parents when they are sick. That is, however, not always an option and families can face great difficulties when their children are sick and so cannot go to child care. If the parent must take time off work to care for the child, it can mean lost income or even loss of employment.

Concerns that people may take time off work to care for children can contribute to employment discrimination against women and against single parents in particular.

Because there are few options for a parent whose child is sick, children are sometimes sent to child care on days when they should not be, placing their health and that of other children and the care providers at risk.

The Task Force believes that a child care centre is not a suitable setting for the care of sick children.

The development of a range of sensible and accessible options for the care of sick children can contribute to enhanced overall quality in the total child care services of Manitoba.

The Task Force supports the Manitoba Blue Cross Child Day Care Accident Plan which provides some financial compensation to offset costs incurred in providing alternative care for a sick child.

Recommendation 104

That the Child Day Care Office continue to examine a range of options for the care of sick children including child minders or other casual or occasional licensed caregivers.

Recommendation 105

That the provincial government encourage employers to develop policies that support parents including permitting employees to take paid sick leave to care for a sick child.

Financial Management and Controls

Financial Management and Controls

The purpose of such processes as budgeting, the preparation of comparative operating statements and audits is not simply to keep and verify records of expenditures. **It is to permit those responsible to anticipate, manage and control expenditures within the system.**

There are weaknesses in the timeliness with which financial information is provided within the current child care system. These weaknesses should be corrected. The recommendations in this section are based on concerns identified by the researcher appointed to the Task Force to study the child care financial system.

The Budget Process

In the Family Day Care system, budgets must be submitted to the Child Day Care Office one month prior to the start of the new fiscal year. This allows for the review and approval of budgets prior to the beginning of the budget period.

Day care centres, however, are not required to submit their budgets until a month following the start of the fiscal year. This significantly reduces financial control and undermines the purpose of the budgeting process which is to provide information to both the centre and the Child Day Care Office prior to the budget period to support planning and control.

Recommendation 106

That Day Care Centre budgets be required to be submitted to the Child Day Care Office one month prior to the start of the new fiscal year.

At the present time, where there are problems with budgets submitted by day care centres, follow-up is normally completed by telephone. In the case of serious problems, such as deficit budgets, meetings are scheduled to resolve the difficulties.

Resolving problems by telephone is convenient, but it leaves no paper trail for audit purposes or for reference in cases where problems persist, thus weakening overall financial control of the system.

Recommendation 107

That Day Care Centres be notified in writing of any problems occurring in their documentation, including details of the nature of the problems, and a set deadline for the submission of new or revised information.

Currently, day care centres are not notified in writing of late submission of budgets until three months after the deadline is passed. Such delays dramatically reduce the usefulness of budgets as a financial management tool.

Recommendation 108

That centres be notified in writing of late budget submissions no later than two to three weeks after the deadline for submission has been passed.

The Funding Manual for Centres suggests that the six month budget for day care centres may be developed by either of:

- dividing the whole year budget by two; or
- estimating the actual costs anticipated within the initial six month period.

Dividing a fiscal year budget by two does not allow an accurate reflection of operations for comparison to the Comparative Operating Statement later in the fiscal year.

Recommendation 109

That centres be required to develop six month budgets based on expected activity with the first half of their fiscal as accurately as possible.

The Comparative Operating Statement

Currently, day care centres are not notified in writing of the lateness of their submissions of the comparative operating statement until three months after the deadline has passed.

Recommendation 110

That centres be notified in writing of late submission of comparative operating statements no later than two to three weeks after the deadline for submission has been passed.

The Audit Process

Currently, audited financial statements from day care centres are not required to be provided to the Child Day Care Office for five months after the end of the previous fiscal year. Given the size of day care operations, the Task Force believes that the five month period for preparation and submission of financial statements is excessive.

It is desirable, for financial management purposes, to have statements as early as possible after the end of a budget period. Manitoba Legislation on Crown Corporations allows up to five months for such corporations as Manitoba Hydro and the Manitoba Telephone System to complete their audited financial statements. These organizations are vastly larger and more complex than day care centres.

Recommendation 111

That day care centres be required to provide the Child Day Care Office with audited financial statements within three months of the end of the fiscal year.

Although the Child Day Care Office has requested that financial statements follow the same format provided on the budget sheets, our review of financial statements shows that, in fact, a variety of formats are used. It is also apparent that information for analysis and verification is in many cases not available in the statements. This necessitates follow-up by the Child Day Care Office.

These variations in format and lack of complete information reduces the usefulness of these statements as a tool for the government to compile information and statistics about the child care system.

Recommendation 112

That a standard format for financial information presentation be developed and that all centres and their auditors be required to adhere to these formats. Where statements do not meet the guidelines, they should be returned to centres for revision prior to approval and continued processing of grant funding.

Recommendation 113

That a standard form letter be sent to centres listing actual grant and subsidy payments made to centres in the previous fiscal year to ensure the reporting of accurate information in financial statements.

As is the case with problems in budgets, there is no paper follow-up when problems occur with the audited financial statements submitted by day care centres; instead, follow-up is completed by telephone unless serious problems occur.

This is convenient, but it fails to provide adequate audit trails within the system.

Recommendation 114

That Day Care Centres be notified in writing of any problems occurring in their financial or management reports, including details of the nature of the problems, and a set deadline for the submission of new or revised information.

Similarly, day care centres are not notified in writing of late submission of audited financial statements until three months after the deadline has passed.

Recommendation 115

That centres be notified in writing of late submission of audited financial statements no later than two to three weeks after the deadline for submission has been passed.

General

The Task Force has some concerns about the adequacy of the Child Day Care Office's information systems.

Recommendation 116

That a systems audit (including financial systems) be conducted on the Child Day Care Office to examine accountability in the child care system and make recommendations for improvements.

The **Accounting Manual for Centres** was developed in 1978 and has been used since that time in training directors and boards in the preparation of financial books and statements.

In the view of the Task Force, the manual may well be too technical and academic in its presentation.

The content of the document is also in need of review for accuracy and financial control.

For example, at one point the manual suggests that an employee be allowed to sign cheques for expenditures in conjunction with the centre director. This could lead to collusion within the centre; expenditure decisions and execution should be limited to the Director and the Board.

Recommendation 117

That the accounting manual be reviewed to ensure that:

- ***it is meeting the needs of the user***
- ***all of its contents are accurate and provide appropriate levels of financial control.***

Training sessions in financial management are provided for Boards, Directors and Family Day Care Providers at a variety of times during the year.

Recommendation 118

It is recommended that training for each area, i.e., board training, director training, be scheduled for specific times during the year in each area and that centres and boards be notified in advance of upcoming training sessions and asked to confirm their attendance.

Recommendation 119

That all child care centre directors have or obtain financial management and accounting skills; acquisition of these skills should be ensured through:

- ***proof of previous training***
- ***enrollment in suitable courses***
- ***challenging for credit.***

The Task Force reviewed and compared the current Funding Manual and the Subsidy Orientation Package for Centres. The Subsidy Orientation Package has more information, especially where the roles and responsibilities of the Child Day Care Office are outlined.

Recommendation 120

That the Funding Manual be revised and presented in a manner similar to the Subsidy Orientation Package.

Recommendation 121

That similar orientation packages be developed for family and group day care homes, including grant and subsidy levels available to these care providers.

Family Day Care Services

Family Day Care Services

In addition to the 9,768 licensed child care spaces in funded and unfunded child care centres in Manitoba, some 2,202 other children are cared for in licensed Family Day Care settings.*

Family day care is care provided, primarily by women, in their own homes. Current regulations permit licensed Family Day Care providers to provide care for up to eight children, aged 12 or under, including any of their own chldren up to the age of twelve.

Funded family day care providers receive small start-up grants and maintenance grants to enhance program quality. They can accept subsidized children. The fees they can charge for their services are controlled.

They are paid the provincially calculated "cost of service" in child care centres, less the amount centres receive as maintenance grants for the care of subsidized children.

* figures as at 6 March 1989

The Family Day Care Model as an Important Option in the Child Care System

The Task Force believes that family day care has great potential to play a wider part in the total child care system in Manitoba. Its major advantages include:

- low costs involved in the establishment of additional spaces
- suitability to meet child care needs in rural areas or areas of relatively low population density
- attractiveness to many parents based on
    - perceptions of a less-institutionalized, more "home like" environment for the child; such factors as the presence of the caregiver's own children, a perception of the caregiver as providng "mothering" care, and the mixture of ages of the children all contribute to these perceptions
    - perceptions of closer personal relations and more personal care between the child and the care provider
    - closer personal relations between the parent and the care provider
    - potential for greater flexibility with respect to hours, etc.
    - possibility of obtaining care closer to the child's home.

Family day care can also provide women with a home-based employment opportunity, something that many rural women in particular have expressed a desire for.

In our hearings, though, the Task Force was struck by the fact that there are very low levels of awareness among parents, and among potential family cay care providers, of the existence of this form of licensed child care in the province.

In our view, **insufficient priority has been placed on the development of family day care** in the past in Manitoba. It is typical to speak — as we do ourselves in some parts of this report — of child care workers in centres "and other care providers".

There has been insufficient attention paid to the development of training and program resources for family day care providers, or to the provision of consulting or other support to these people.

There are perceptions in some parts of the system that, because family day care providers are not required to have Child Care Worker qualifications, this is a secondary and less desirable means of service delivery.

The Task Force believes there is no basis for this view.

Discussion and Detailed Recommendations

The Task Force believes that, in many situations and for many families, family day care arrangements may be the most desirable form of delivery for child care services.

Recommendation 122

That the government establish and articulate a clear policy of encouraging the development of additional spaces in licensed family day care as an integral part of its strategy for expanding the child care system to meet the needs of Manitoba families.

As mentioned previously, professional associations in the child care field have played and can continue to play an important role in research and development. In the case of family day care, which is still largely in its developmental stages, the Family Day Care Association's participation is especially useful.

Licensed Family Day Care and the Informal Sector

In Manitoba, as elsewhere in Canada, there are vast numbers of children who receive care in the informal system: in private homes under arrangements made between their parents and neighbours, relatives or others.

In some cases, this is a result of deliberate parental choice:

- parents may perceive child care centres as being "too institutional"
- they may already have a relationship with the caregiver
- they may be able to make more flexible care arrangements, i.e. part-days or part-time, with an unlicensed care giver than they can with licensed centres or family day care providers
- they may be unaware of the option of licensed family day care
- they may feel that they are competent to evaluate and make their own care arrangements without "bureaucratic" interference from the government.

In many other cases, **parents may make use of informal care arrangements because they are unable to find care in licensed facilities** because of the shortage of spaces in the child care system as a whole.

At the present time, there are provincial regulations that prohibit anyone from caring for more than 4 children, including their own, without being licensed as a family day care provider. These regulations are manifestly ineffective and probably unenforceable. They are routinely broken in neighbourhoods and communities across Manitoba.

If they were not, the shortage in licensed spaces throughout the system would be even more severe than it is at present.

These restrictions do have several negative effects:

- they make many people — both parents who have no other alternative and capable and dedicated care providers — into formal law breakers, despite the fact that the province has failed to provide enough licensed spaces to meet the need that exists
- they make these informal arrangements "invisible" in quality terms; because regulations say they cannot exist, the Child Day Care Office provides no support or training to the unlicensed provider and only minimal information to parents to help them ensure that there is acceptable quality in the care being offered; the unlicensed provider is unlikely to seek help or support from the Child Day Care Office
- the limitations of licensing actively discourage many otherwise responsible and competent care providers from seeking to become licensed.

In practical terms, it is unlikely that government would ever have sufficient resources to effectively monitor and supervise all care situations involving more than four children even if all such providers were to seek licensing. The government does, however, have an obligation to encourage the highest possible quality of care for all Manitoba children.

In the view of the Child Care Task Force, an appropriate course of action is not to make being unlicensed a crime; it is to make entering the licensed system attractive to the care provider and the families for whose children she provides care.

A necessary first step in a strategy to encourage care providers to enter the licensed system is to alter the current unsuccessful and unenforceable regulations.

Recommendation 123

That the number of children that may be cared for by an individual in his/her own home without being required to become licensed be the same as permitted in licensed Family Day Care homes.

Recommendation 124

That only the care provider's own children under the age of ten count against the maximum allowable number of eight children for both licensed and unlicensed care providers.

Enhancing Standards in Family Day Care

The Task Force believes that a broad strategy to enhance standards in license family day care must accompany relaxing restrictions in the informal sector. If licensed family day care is to be of high quality, the formal system must attract competent and dedicated providers by meaningful incentives.

Recommendation 125

That professional development courses in areas of safety and nutrition be mandatory on licensing and/or attended by all licensed providers within 12 months (with exemptions to be granted by the Provincial coordinator where appropriate).

Recommendation 126

That all new and existing licensed family day care providers be required to attend workshops within the next 12 months including:

- ***behaviour management***
- ***child development***

and that these skills be upgraded yearly (with exemptions to be granted by the Provincial coordinator where appropriate).

Recommendation 127

That no licensed family day care provider be permitted to care for more than one child under the age of 12 months.

Recommendation 128

That all licensed family day care space must be smoke free during the hours when care is being given.

Recommendation 129

That regulations regarding domestic animals be expanded to include a provision authorizing the Director to require that animals in licensed family day care homes be confined in a space separate from the children. The regulations should also require all licensed family day care providers to develop a clear policy relating to domestic animals kept in the home.

Recommendation 130

That Regulation #31 (4) be amended to make provision of meals and snacks mandatory for all licensed family day care providers.

Recommendation 131

That all licensed family day care providers upgrade Infant and Child CPR and Choking courses each year.

The Task Force also believes that the province should make every reasonable effort to discourage the use of disposable diapers in Family Day Care homes in the province.

We also believe that the province should accept an obligation to encourage and support the highest possible quality of care and effective parental involvement in both licensed and unlicensed care situations.

The family day care providers have formed a self-help organization — the Family Day Care Association — that encourages networking and communication among providers, and is involved in training. This voluntary organization can play an effective role as a partner with government in efforts to provide more effective support to the family day care system in Manitoba.

It is essential that the province increase the awareness of family day care among parents and potential licensed care providers. This is particularly important in rural areas where the family day model will often be particularly appropriate to meet local needs.

Recommendation 132

That the province, in cooperation with the Family Day Care Association, develop communications materials about the licensed Family Day Care option, and disseminate these materials through government offices and programs, including through the Home Economists employed by the Department of Agriculture.

Recommendation 133

That the province work with the Family Day Care Association to develop appropriate training and program materials, and to disseminate them to all licensed care providers.

Recommendation 134

That the province cooperate with the Family Day Care Association in developing an easy to use planning package to assist potential providers, especially in rural and remote areas, in evaluating and planning.

The Family Day Care Association currently provides a "networking" service for family day care providers, to help allay isolation problems and to share information. The Association also provides help and advice to unlicensed providers when asked to do so.

Recommendation 135

That the province support the Family Day Care Association's networking and communication activities and other services and encourage the extension of these activities to unlicensed providers to encourage them to join the licensed system.

Enhancing Parental Involvement

The best guarantee of quality in any child care setting is the active and informed involvement of parents in the selection and monitoring of the child care service. This is especially true in the case of family day care; the physical nature of family day care — with many locations, each caring for only a few children — makes extensive monitoring and supervision a difficult and costly proposition for government.

Recommendation 136

That the province cooperate with the Family Day Care Association to develop a section to be included in the current "Parents' Guide" providing extensive information on the selection and regular evaluation of family day care arrangements. The guide should include:

- ***check lists for parents to use in evaluating service prior to selection and in ongoing monitoring of care***
- ***an overview of key quality criteria***
- ***agenda for regular discussions with the care provider***
- ***a suggestion that parents urge their care providers to enter the licensed system.***

This material can enhance quality in both the licensed and informal sectors by strengthening parental involvement. It is important that the public be informed of the existence of this resource.

The Child Day Care Office has developed a recommended standard contract for agreements between licensed providers and parents. In general, providers use this standard contract as a basis, adding conditions and/or undertakings appropriate to the individual situation.

This contract can form the basis of a more extensive "job aide" that providers can use in establishing and maintaining clear understandings with and the ongoing involvement of the parents of the children in their care.

Recommendation 137

That the province cooperate with the Family Day Care Association to develop a "Parental Involvement Guide" job aide for care providers. The guide should include:

- ***a revised and expanded standard "contract", which providers can use to ensure that both they and the parent have a clear understanding of all aspects of the care arrangement; the contract will include basic information on the nature of the care program, i.e. kinds of activities, etc., as well as clear identification of the parents' obligations***
- ***agenda for regular discussions with the parent.***

These materials should be disseminated widely through government offices.

Expanding the Licensed Proportion of the System

In addition to working to attract new providers, the province should work actively to encourage unlicensed providers to enter the licensed system, and to ensure enhanced quality of care among unlicensed care providers.

Recommendation 138

That the province support the Family Day Care Association in the dissemination of materials to unlicensed providers to enhance the quality of the care they provide, and to demonstrate to them the advantages of entering the licensed system.

Financial Support for Family Day Care

The current system of financial support for Family Day Care can be improved.

Recommendation 139

That "start up" grants be increased to permit the purchase of equipment, etc. by licensed family day care providers, and that start-up grants to paid to all licensed family day care providers including otherwise unfunded providers as an incentive to enter the licensed system.

Recommendation 140

That maintenance grants to licensed family day care providers be "front ended", with full grants paid for the first three years in the licensed system, and base level grants thereafter. All currently funded providers should receive the full grant for 1989/90.

Recommendation 141

That maintenance grants be used solely for the purchase of toys and equipment directly related to the care of the children.

Recommendation 142

That all family day care providers who receive maintenance grants be required to sign an agreement that any equipment purchased with these grants — minus replacement equipment — will be passed to the family day care home of the provider's choice should the home close.

In some cases, low income parents would find becoming a licensed family day care provider attractive except for financial limitations.

If such a parent qualified for subsidy, he/she could place their child in care in a centre or with a family day care provider at no or a reduced cost, but would receive no support were he/she to elect to care for the child him/herself as a licensed family day care provider.

Recommendation 143

That licensed caregivers who qualify for subsidy be allowed to receive a per diem for the care of their own children, along with others, as a licensed family day care provider, with their own children being excluded from grant support.

Using Family Day Care to Enhance the Flexibility and Adaptability of the Child Care System

The family day care model is capable of greater flexibility than the centre based model of child care service delivery.

Recommendation 144

That the province work with the Family Day Care Association in developing innovative approaches to providing such kinds of care as:

- ***infant specialty homes (supported by innovative funding)***
- ***seasonal care in rural areas (planting, harvest)***
- ***off-hours care (for shift workers)***
- ***part-time or casual care***
- ***respite care***
- ***care keyed to the needs of particular populations, i.e. mothers who are in vocational training programs, etc.***

Special Needs Children and Family Day Care

Family day care can play an important part in providing care to children with special needs if there are appropriate supports provided.

Recommendation 145

That the province develop programs of support for the integration of special needs children into family day care settings including:

- ***provision of workshop training opportunities in special needs***
- ***increases in disability grants to providers***
- ***consideration of counting special needs children as "two spaces" for grant purposes.***

Training and Resources

There is a perception among family day providers that the Child Day Care Office does not treat them as a priority. They note the lack of consulting or helping resources for family day care providers.

If this part of the licensed system is to be expanded and if the quality of care provided through Family Day Care is to be enhanced, there is a need for increased support and communication from the Child Day Care Office.

Recommendation 146

That the province work with the Family Day Care Association on an ongoing basis to continue to develop and implement appropriate training resources including:

- ***clear commitments of funds to ensure availability of training***
- ***continued development of an integrated basic training program that will become mandatory for family day care providers after five years***
- ***development of a classification system related to training for family day care providers, including financial recognition of training achieved. Such a system should recognize training specific to family day care providers as well as provide Salary Enhancement Grants (or equivalent should salary enhancement be merged with base funding) for those with CCWII and CCWIII qualifications.***

Group Family Day Care Homes

In addition to family day care provider arrangements, the province licenses "Group Family Day Care Homes" — Family Day situations in which two adults are involved in the care of more than eight children.

While the Task Force believes that this concept may have merit, particularly in rural areas, there are problems of monitoring and enforcement; we also have doubts about the adequacy of physical plant and overall supervision in these settings.

Recommendation 147

That the province review the Group Family Day Care Home concept to ascertain:

- ***whether this is a viable form of service delivery***
- ***whether it should be abandoned***
- ***whether it should be used, with special monitoring and supervision activities, only in certain regions or situations.***

Rural Child Care

The Task Force supports the right of rural Manitobans to choose the way of life they prefer, regardless of geographical location. We further believe that parents in rural Manitoba have a right to child care of the same quality as that in urban centres.

The development of child care services in rural areas of Manitoba involves some special difficulties.

There are **financial difficulties**: low population densities and large distances can make it difficult to establish economically viable child care programs using funding formula that are more reflective of urban conditions.

There are **physical difficulties**: in many parts of Manitoba there is a shortage of appropriate physical facilities to house child care programs.

There are **informational difficulties**: families are not well-informed about available services or the availability of government support; potential providers, including potential family day care providers, are often not aware of the provincial programs that do exist.

There are **difficulties in the delivery of training**: rural care providers face the need to leave their communities and travel to centres where there are community colleges to obtain training.

Particularly in today's rural economic circumstances, where many farm women find it necessary to earn off-farm income, the shortage of child care can represent a significant hardship.

It appears that many of the financial difficulties rural child care centres face are related to the fact that they are often small centres coping with fluctuating enrollments and attendance. We also noted that, while some centres seemed to have difficulties, others were functioning quite well.

The Task Force therefore felt that additional maintenance to all rural centres would establish inequities in the funding of child care which are not necessarily justifiable.

Rather, we felt that that funding designated to assist small centres which could show a proven documented need would be a more reasonable option. Such a fund would allow the Child Day Care Office to assess the management ability of the centre, community needs and circumstances and other relevant factors.

We recommend the establishment of such a fund in the Funding Strategy Section of this report.

Recommendation 148

That the province undertake a rural public awareness/education program to ensure that:

- ***families are aware of child care options and services***
- ***potential providers are aware of available support***
- ***potential family day care providers are aware of this option.***

Recommendation 149

That training be provided in a form usable in rural areas including self-paced learning materials, video support and support from specialists who can visit rural communities.

The large distances and other circumstances that apply in rural Manitoba can also have implications for overall program quality and for appropriate regulation. Some forms and models of child care may be particularly appropriate to rural needs.

Recommendation 150

That specialists visit rural child care programs to assist in the development of programming for children with special needs.

Recommendation 151

That the province encourage the development and testing of particular models of child care that can meet the needs of rural families including but not limited to:

- ***co-op child care programs***
- ***seasonal care programs, i.e. seeding and harvest***
- ***combined nursery school and school age child care programs***
- ***innovative ideas for expansion/modification of existing programs.***

Rural Education and Training Access

The Task Force believes there is a need for special initiatives to make training opportunities accessible and responsive to rural needs.

Recommendation 152

That the numbers of students required to run community college classes be reduced in rural areas.

Recommendation 153

That distance education modules be developed including correspondence and teleconferencing; the Task Force supports the method of delivery being used in the "Training For Child Care '88 Program" currently being delivered.

Recommendation 154

That a practicum supervisor travel to outlying areas in conjunction with distance education modules.

Recommendation 155

That an initiative fund be establish to make funding available for the development of innovative and creative models of education for rural areas.

A New Partnership For Aboriginal Child Care

Manitobans of Aboriginal descent — status and non-status Indians, Inuit and Metis — brought a very clear message to the Child Care Task Force: they believe that **the evolution of forms of child care that reflect Aboriginal culture and aspirations can be a powerful tool in their efforts to strengthen the culture, dignity and ability to prosper of Aboriginal Manitobans.**

Recent Aboriginal progress in Manitoba is based on two foundations.

One is **a strengthening of Aboriginal culture in a way that contributes to increased self-respect and confidence among Aboriginal people.**

The second is **a growing assumption by Aboriginal Manitobans of control over and responsibility for their own affairs.**

Those who appeared before the Task Force urged that child care services, delivered through Aboriginal organizations, be adapted to meet the particular needs of Aboriginal families on reservations, in non-status communities and in the urban environment.

Such services would be dedicated to the same principles of quality as those endorsed by all Manitobans. This type of system could **respond to the social and economic realities Aboriginal Manitobans face, and could operate as a powerful instrument in strengthening their culture.**

The Task Force shares this vision.

The Task Force proposes a different form of partnership to provide Aboriginal families with child care.

The main differences between the partnership the Task Force envisions for Aboriginal child care and that which is evolving in the child care system as a whole are:

- a greater and more explicit role for the extended family
- responsibility for and control over the program by the Aboriginal community
- development of programs that reflect and help strengthen Aboriginal culture.

The Role of Parents and the Extended Family in the Partnership For Aboriginal Child Care

Like other parents, Aboriginal parents should have the right and responsibility to choose the care arrangements they wish for their children, and should have ultimate responsibility for the quality of care provided.

In Aboriginal patterns of childrearing, however, there is typically a very significant involvement of the extended family. In particular, Elders play a very active role in both the care and the instruction of children, especially as it relates to Aboriginal language, history, culture and customs.

In the partnership for Aboriginal child care, the extended family would participate along with parents in meeting their responsibilities, and Elders would participate actively in the care of the children, playing their traditional roles as the guardians and communicators of the Aboriginal culture.

The Role of the Care Provider in the Partnership for Aboriginal Child Care

As in all child care, the care provider must have appropriate knowledge, skills and training to contribute to the safe and healthy development of the child. In the Aboriginal child care context, however, there will be additional specific requirements:

- care providers should be able to communicate in Aboriginal languages — primarily Cree and Ojibway
- care providers should be trained and knowledgeable in Aboriginal history and culture
- care providers should be committed to the strengthening of Aboriginal culture as a key contributor to self respect and confidence among Aboriginal children.

There will be some differences between the structure of care programs for Aboriginals and those that are evolving in the rest of the community.

Much of the focus in child care programming has been on the development of age appropriate developmental programs. Within the context of Aboriginal culture, children are far less likely to be segregated by age, and interactions between children of different ages will be a significant element in these programs.

Because specific training resources and child care programs related to Aboriginal needs do not yet exist, the providers will also be called upon to work in partnership with families and the community at large in the development of such resources and programs.

The Role of the Community in the Partnership for Aboriginal Child Care

The Aboriginal community, through its existing and evolving institutions and organizations, should be responsible for the development and delivery of Aboriginal child care.

These responsibilities could be discharged by Band Councils on reserves, Community Councils in non-status communities, and by established Aboriginal social agencies in urban areas.

The responsibilities should include:

- the adaptation of standards and regulations to ensure that the health and safety of children is protected in a manner that is appropriate to the environments in which care will be provided
- enforcement of standards and regulations
- management and staffing
- active participation in the development of appropriate training resources and child care programs
- ensuring that other health and social services are effectively linked to the child care activities, delivering health promotion and other services to the children and their families through the child care program.

The Role of the Province in the Partnership For Aboriginal Child Care

It is envisioned that the province will delegate much of the responsibility for the operation of Aboriginal child care to the Aboriginal community itself, but it will be essential that the province help to provide the financial and other resources that will be required for the development of this part of the child care system in Manitoba.

Among the specific provincial roles should be:

- a broad policy of support for efforts to strengthen Aboriginal culture and for Aboriginal efforts to assume control and responsibility for their own affairs
- advocacy with the federal government to ensure that it provides appropriate support for the evolution of Aboriginal child care services
- support to the Aboriginal community with regard to the adaptation of standards and regulations, including the provision of expert services with respect to health and safety standards and regulations
- development of appropriate training programs and resources for Aboriginal child care providers, to be delivered through community colleges and Aboriginal organizations across Manitoba; the Yellowquill College which is currently being funded through the federal Child Care Initiatives Fund can serve as a first step in the development of this training
- provision of resources to enable these services to evolve as Aboriginal controlled services in Manitoba.

The Role of the Federal Government in the Partnership For Aboriginal Child Care

The federal government has a special responsibility to Aboriginal Canadians. Under the Indian Act, Ottawa has financial responsibility for the provision of a broad range of services to status Indians and has jurisdiction on Indian Reserves.

Within the context of an evolving system of Aboriginal child care, the federal role should include:

- a broad policy of support for Aboriginal efforts to strengthen Aboriginal culture and for Aboriginal efforts to assume control and responsibility for their own affairs
- provision of resources to support the development of such care programs and the training programs and resources that care providers will require within the Aboriginal child care system
- cooperation in the provision of suitable facilities for child care programs on reserves
- provision of support to the Aboriginal community in the development of appropriate standards and programs for Aboriginal child care.

Discussion and Detailed Recommendations

A Commitment to Aboriginal Child Care

There is significant skepticism in the Aboriginal community as to the depth of the province's commitment to Aboriginal services in general. This skepticism extends to the development of additional Aboriginal run services aimed at ensuring that the community assumes greater responsibility for and control over their own affairs.

Further, there is a view that government actions tend to involve efforts to transfer white, urban models of program delivery to Aboriginal situations where they may not be appropriate.

In many ways, community-based patterns of child care reflect traditional Aboriginal patterns. The provision of additional resources and the development of care programs and materials can significantly enhance these traditional patterns and the contributions they can make to the longer term interests of Aboriginal children.

Recommendation 156

That the government announce a clear policy of favouring the development of a system of Aboriginal child care that is:

- ***community based***
- ***Aboriginal controlled***
- ***Aboriginal staffed***
- ***committed to the strengthening of Aboriginal culture.***

Developing the Expertise Needed to Support the Evolution of Aboriginal Child Care

At the present time, the Child Day Care Office has no specific expertise in the development of child care programs for Aboriginal children. There are no program support or training materials or resources that reflect the particular needs and potentials of Aboriginal child care, although the work being done through Yellowquill College, with short term federal financial support, is a promising beginning.

Recommendation 157

That a Aboriginal Child Care Unit be established in the Child Day Care Office which will be:

- *staffed by Aboriginal personnel*
- *responsible for providing consulting, developmental funding, and other support to evolving Aboriginal child care programs*
- *responsible for supporting the development and dissemination of programs to Aboriginal child care centres*
- *responsible for supporting the development and dissemination of program materials reflecting Aboriginal culture and progress to the child care system as a whole.*

Recommendation 158

That the provincial government enter into negotiations with the federal government for the purpose of establishing an agreement for shared long term financial support of Yellowquill College.

Recommendation 159

That regardless of federal funding, appropriate training programs be developed, in cooperation with Yellowquill College and the Aboriginal community, and offered both through community colleges and in forms suitable for use in Aboriginal communities.

Establishing Aboriginal Responsibility For and Control Over Aboriginal Child Care

Models for the delegation of government responsibilities to the Aboriginal community already exist in Aboriginal Child Welfare Agencies and the operation of schools in Aboriginal communities and on Indian Reserves.

The development of similar arrangements is seen as critical to the ability of Aboriginal child care to make the greatest possible contribution to the Aboriginal community in Manitoba.

Past experience has shown that such delegation of responsibility is most successful where there are clear understandings reached between government and specific, established organizations.

A critical first step in establishing Aboriginal responsibility for and control over Aboriginal child care programs will be reaching agreements as to the adaptation of standards and regulations, and the nature of the supervision and monitoring of these programs by the Aboriginal community.

Recommendation 160

That the province enter into tripartite negotiations with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, the First Nations Confederacy and the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. to agree on:

- ***basic guidelines for the operations of child care programs on reserves***
- ***methods of supervision and monitoring of these programs through Band or Tribal Councils***
- ***the establishment of an Indian Government (eg. AMC) Child Care Committee to work with the Aboriginal Child Care Unit of the Child Day Care Office***
- ***the provision of necessary consulting and other support through the Aboriginal Child Care Unit of the Child Day Care Office.***

Recommendation 161

That the province enter into negotiations with representatives of the Manitoba Metis Federation to agree on:

- ***basic guidelines for the operation of Aboriginal child care programs in non-status communities***
- ***methods of supervision and monitoring of these programs through Community Councils or other acceptable local organizations such as the Northern Association of Community Councils.***

The Task Force supports the concept of distinct Aboriginal child care programs in urban centres as well. These programs should engage in outreach activities to integrated child care programs.

Recommendation 162

That the Child Day Care Office work with urban Aboriginal social agencies to develop Aboriginal child care centres in urban areas.

Laying the Foundations for the Aboriginal Child Care System

There are some 222 Aboriginal communities in Manitoba including some 80 reserves governed by some 61 band councils. It is estimated that there are some 60,000 Aboriginals resident in Winnipeg, with thousands more in other Manitoba urban centres.

Clearly, it is not feasible — in financial or in organizational terms — to provide child care services to the entire Aboriginal population immediately, but the goal should be the development of a province-wide system of Aboriginal Child Care services, phased in by a method agreed to among the government and the representative organizations of the Aboriginal Community. These child care opportunities should be available to all families in Manitoba, including those in such other urban areas as Brandon, Thompson, The Pas, Flin Flon, Selkirk and Dauphin.

In addition, there is a severe shortage of program materials or resources in Aboriginal languages or relating to Aboriginal culture or traditional Aboriginal patterns of child rearing. Such organizations as the Manitoba Association of Native Languages and the Native Education Branch have the capacity to be effective avenues for the development of such materials.

The government in Manitoba does not yet **know how to provide the kind of child care that can make the greatest possible contribution to the strengthening of Aboriginal culture and the longer term well-being of Aboriginal children, but there are institutions, organizations and individuals throughout the province who can help achieve that learning.**

Acquiring that knowledge and developing the materials and resources, including training resources, that will be needed to provide the service on a province-wide basis should be a priority, as should the development of appropriate expertise within the Aboriginal community.

Recommendation 163

That, as a priority, the province agree to work with the urban and rural Aboriginal organizations previously mentioned to agree upon and establish immediately child care programs in reserve, non-status community and urban settings.

There are already a number of community-based programs that have been established without special provincial assistance that are suitable for immediate support and can function as learning/training centres for the development of the Aboriginal Child Care system in Manitoba.

Recommendation 164

That these centres function as training resources, and be closely linked through the Aboriginal Child Care Unit of the Child Day Care Office with Yellowquill College, the Faculty of Human Ecology at the University of Manitoba, and the Child Care faculties of other community colleges in the identification and development of appropriate materials, resources and training programs to support Aboriginal child care in Manitoba.

Recommendation 165

That funding and support be extended to additional reserve, non-status and urban Aboriginal child care programs as quickly as possible with the goal of ensuring that all families who wish to use this service have realistic access to it, no matter where in Manitoba they may live.

Recommendation 166

That an active effort be made to encourage development in the licensed family day care system on reserves, in non-status communities and in urban areas, and to provide appropriate resources and materials including training resources to Family Day Care providers and local child care committees in these settings through the Aboriginal Child Care Unit of the Child Day Care Office.

Recommendation 167

That the province enter into tripartite negotiations with the federal government and representative Aboriginal Organizations with the object of obtaining federal commitment to the funding of child care services, and to participation in the costs related to development of appropriate program resources and materials, including training resources.

Aboriginal Children in the Child Care System as a Whole

Not all Aboriginal families, particularly in urban areas, will choose to send their children to Aboriginal child care programs. In any event, many will not have that option until the Aboriginal Child Care system has had an opportunity to grow.

Appropriate programming in the child care system generally can better serve Aboriginal children if it includes resources and materials dealing with Aboriginal culture and history in a way that will contribute to the children's development of greater knowledge about and pride in their heritage.

Such programming can also benefit the community as a whole, by working against stereotyping of Aboriginals and racist attitudes in the population as a whole.

Recommendation 168

That the Aboriginal child care centres also function as training resources for child care workers in the system as a whole, with priority assigned to providing training opportunities to child care workers and other care providers who are currently caring for Aboriginal children.

Recommendation 169

That the Aboriginal Child Care Unit of the Child Day Care Office work with the Aboriginal Child Care system and the training and educational system in the development of materials and resources relating to Aboriginal culture and history that will be appropriate for inclusion in child care programs generally in Manitoba.

The Funding of Child Care in Manitoba

The Task Force is aware that the improvements in quality that we are recommending in this report will have impacts on the overall and unit cost of child care services in Manitoba: the total costs for child care services will increase, and the costs of providing care for each child will also increase.

The main components of these increased costs will be:

- expansion in the system to provide an adequate number of spaces to meet the needs of Manitoba families
- development of an Aboriginal child care system
- increased infrastructure for the system, i.e. provision of additional training resources and opportunities for care providers, development of support materials for use by parents and care providers, enhanced ability to provide consulting assistance to care programs through the Child Day Care Office, etc.
- innovation to support the development of broader care options including service delivery models suitable to the particular needs of rural areas
- increases in the salaries and career options of child care workers and other care providers.

The Task Force believes that these increased costs are justified and necessary if the child care system of Manitoba is to continue to evolve as a developmental partnership to meet the needs of Manitoba families.

We recognize, however, that increases in costs present government with a number of dilemmas:

Dilemma One:

There is already a shortage of licensed child care spaces in Manitoba; the greater the cost to government for services currently provided, the less money will be available to invest in needed expansion of the system.

The Task Force is sensitive to the trade-off between increasing the quality (and costs) of the current child care system in Manitoba and government's ability to contribute to expansion in the number of licensed spaces available to Manitoba families.

We believe these increases are needed, however, because:

- the quality and the stability of the Manitoba child care system is at risk because salaries, training, career opportunities and recognition of the contribution of child care workers are all inadequate
- increasingly, parents expect that the care provided to their children will be a developmental service; the improvements we are recommending are essential if the system is to be able to meet those expectations
- the development of a system of Aboriginal child care can make a significant contribution to the overall efforts of Aboriginal people in Manitoba to strengthen their culture and take greater responsibility for their own affairs
- improved infrastructure is essential especially to support the role of the parent as "Senior Partner" in the child care partnership
- the need to develop models and approaches for child care in rural areas is inescapable if these Manitoba families are to have comparable access to this service in an appropriate and cost-effective form.

In short, it is not a matter of choosing whether to enhance or expand the child care system in Manitoba. Both are needed if this evolving service is to meet the needs and expectations of Manitoba families.

Dilemma Two:

If the effect of increased quality is to drive up fees, the service will become less affordable, and therefore less accessible, to Manitoba families including many of those who need it most.

The Task Force believes that, where they are able to do so, parents should pay fees that contribute toward the total costs of child care.

Further, we believe that there is scope for some increase in the current average fee levels, assuring that any such increase is balanced by modifications in the subsidy system to ensure that it does not result in hardship for lower income families.

But we believe that the principle has already been established by successive governments in Manitoba: **the government accepts the responsibility to commit public monies to ensure that these services are both of an acceptable quality and affordable to most Manitoba families.**

Therefore, we believe that government should and will increase its direct contributions to the child care system so as to ensure that the fees charged to parents continue to be affordable for most Manitoba families, while at the same time ensuring that there are adequate subsidies to ensure that those of more limited means can continue to have realistic access to this service.

Funding in the Child Care System

The current licensed child care system of Manitoba is really two systems — one funded, and one unfunded.

The funded system includes **"designated" spaces in not-for-profit child care centres** for which the government accepts responsibility to contribute to salaries (through salary enhancement grants) and to overall operating costs (through maintenance grants), as well as providing subsidies for any qualified parent who chooses to use this service.

There are also **funded spaces in licensed Family Day Care** homes.

The unfunded system includes **"non-designated" spaces in not-for-profit child care centres and spaces provided in commercial child care centres** as well as **unfunded spaces in Family Day Care homes**. This group includes 569 spaces in unfunded not-for-profit centres, 1,251 spaces in commercial centres, and 514 unfunded family day care spaces.*

Government makes no direct contributions towards salaries or operating costs in these unfunded child care programs, except through the subsidies it provides for qualified parents who choose to use these services. No more than 25% of the total enrollment in unfunded centres or homes may consist of subsidized children.

Both groups must meet Manitoba's licensing requirements and standards of operation. Both groups provide care to Manitoba families, in accordance with those requirements and standards.

But the two parts of the system are treated differently by government from a funding perspective. **In effect, the government invests less in the care of each child, including all subsidized children, in a non-designated space than it does in the care of each child in a designated space, although all of the spaces are licensed and meet the standards established by the province.**

These inequities grew partially out of government efforts to contain the costs of child care services in Manitoba by limiting designation to only a portion of the licensed spaces that Manitoba families actually use.

* Figures as at 6 March 1989

An additional anomaly was created when, rather than providing additional government support to offset rising costs, the government permitted not-for-profit centres and funded homes themselves to charge parents an additional $1 per day. Not all centres collect this additional fee, but it can be levied and is levied **even on families who qualify for "100%" subsidy.**

As our recommendations will make clear, the Task Force is not unanimous as to desirability of commercial child care programs. We do, however, agree in principle that the current two tier system — with unequal support provided for the care of Manitoba children in licensed programs based solely on whether or not the space has been "designated" — does create anomalies.

We further agree that the dilution of the subsidy that results from permitting centres to levy extra charges on subsidized families is undesirable.

Principles For A Funding Strategy

In the view of the Task Force, an appropriate funding strategy for the province will be based on the following four principles:

1. Parents should continue to contribute towards the costs of child care, in accordance with their ability to pay

2. Government should contribute directly towards the costs of the licensed child care system so as to ensure that fee levels are affordable to most Manitoba families

3. Government should provide subsidies to ensure that all Manitoba families have realistic access to licensed child care services

4. Government should address the anomalies that have grown up in the financial support system for child care in Manitoba.

Discussion and Detailed Recommendations

Principle One:

Parents should continue to contribute towards the costs of child care, in accordance with their ability to pay.

In our hearings across Manitoba, we found that parents are prepared to pay fees for child care — in keeping with their ability to pay. **The greatest concern is not the idea of fees or even their level, but the adequacy of supply of this service, and the quality of the developmental care being provided to Manitoba children.**

Given the financial constraints that governments in Canada and Manitoba face today, we believe that the parents of Manitoba would agree with us that removing fees and moving towards a totally government-financed service is not a priority. Rather, available resources should be concentrated on ensuring expansion in the system, improvement in quality and continued affordability.

Recommendation 170

That parents continue to contribute to the costs of the child care services provided by the licensed child care system in Manitoba by paying fees, where they are able to do so.

Principle Two:

Government should contribute directly towards the costs of the licensed child care system so as to ensure that fee levels are affordable to most Manitoba families.

There is a certain theoretical appeal in a system in which those who can afford to do so pay the entire cost of services like child care, with government providing assistance to all others.

That is not the Canadian or Manitoba tradition for the provision of human services. Universal service systems like the public school system and the health services system reflect an egalitarian view that is central to the values Manitobans share.

Without suggesting that child care services should also become a universal service, the Task Force believes that **the costs of entry to the service — the fees that parents will be required to pay — should be set at a level that ensures that most Manitoba families be able to afford this service if they wish to use it, without the need to apply for direct government assistance.**

If the fee structure is set too high, in an effort to ensure that those who are well off contribute as much as possible, it is likely that they will seek out other options — hiring nannies or making other private arrangements — and leave the system.

At the same time, fewer and fewer families will be able to afford the fees without government assistance. Those at the margins, who are unused to asking for government assistance, will also tend to make other arrangements for their children.

The danger here is that licensed child care system could become increasingly a service used solely by the poorest members of the community — those who are used to relying on government assistance.

In any event, the delivery of government's contribution to the costs of child care services — should it all go through subsidies paid to families who apply, qualify and demonstrate continued qualification — would be a costly and bureaucratic approach to this social investment.

The goal — and the potential — of child care services is not to become an adjunct of the welfare system, but rather to become a positive and creative developmental service that will benefit children and their parents, serving families of differing cultural backgrounds, income levels — the diversity of Manitoba.

To achieve that goal, fees must be set such that most Manitoba families can afford to pay them.

Recommendation 171

That the bulk of government's contribution to the costs of child care, including contributions to support salary increases for child care workers and other care providers, be paid directly into the system.

Recommendation 172

That the fees charged to parents not reflect the full cost of this service, but be maintained at levels that are affordable for most Manitoba families.

Principle Three

Government should provide subsidies to ensure that all Manitoba families have realistic access to licensed child care services.

The principle of subsidization of child care services is clearly established in Manitoba. It is that government will provide assistance to those who need it in order to purchase child care services from licensed programs in the province.

We believe that the current fee/subsidy structure can usefully be changed:

- to provide for higher maximum fees (within the conceptual limits discussed above)
- to provide additional assistance to ensure that increased costs resulting from quality enhancements in the system do not affect those who are currently on subsidy, reducing their access to this service
- to provide subsidies based on an income testing formula that takes other children and the costs associated with child rearing fully into account.

Recommendation 173

That the subsidy formula be altered to provide full subsidy to a higher level of income and to reduce subsidy more gradually as incomes increase.

Recommendation 174

That the subsidy income test take into account the number of children in care, regardless of whether or not those children are in licensed child care, so that a parent with several children will qualify for subsidies to a higher income level.

Recommendation 175

That the Child Day Care Office develop a workable policy to fairly determine eligibility of self-employed people for child care subsidy.

Many of those who made submissions to the Task Force expressed concern that subsidy applications have taken an unreasonable length of time for approval and payment. At the present time, an automated system is being installed in the Child Day Care Office and the Task Force is optimistic that, once this system has been implemented, many of these problems will be alleviated.

Recommendation 176

That the child care subsidy assessment and payment process be reviewed after the first year of operation on the automated system to assess its adequacy and to identify additional needs.

Recommendation 177

That the maximum fee parents will pay be increased no more than 25% effective immediately, and that future increases reflect the principle of affordability.

Recommendation 178

That a set fee be established for the daily cost of child care, and the Child Day Care Office require full fees to be charged to parents in order for centres and homes to qualify for government grant funding.

The Task Force believes that there are some inequities in the costs of care for school age children that should be addressed.

Recommendation 179

That fees for part time care for school children (i.e. regular school days) be exempt from the 25% fee increase.

Recommendation 180

That the fees for full time school age care (i.e. inservice, school holidays, etc.) be increased to equal the fees paid for full time preschool care.

Principle Four

Government should address the anomalies that have evolved in the financial support system for child care in Manitoba.

Past government efforts to contain the costs of child care have created inequities in the form of different levels of government support for the care of children in designated and non-designated spaces.

Recommendation 181

That the government immediately "designate" all existing full-time licensed child care spaces in the not-for-profit sector, and provide salary enhancement and maintenance grants in respect of those spaces.

Designation also normally involves the provision of "start-up" grants. The purpose of these grants is to make it possible for the spaces to be created. Where new spaces have been created without such support, there is no justification, in the Task Force's view, for providing such grants retroactively.

Recommendation 182

That "designation" of existing non-designated spaces in the not-for-profit sector entitle these programs to receive salary enhancement and maintenance grant support, but not include "start-up" grants in respect of these already existing spaces.

In addition, the Task Force believes that the government should review the overall form and levels of its grant funding to child care in Manitoba.

Grant Funding

Maintenance grants to child care centres and homes have not been increased in several years. During that time, costs have increased at the rate of inflation or higher, there have been increased pressures to raise salaries, and additional costs not directly related to the care of the child, i.e. property taxes, Workers' Compensation, etc., have resulted in growing financial pressures on child care centres and homes.

The Task Force recognizes that, if these pressures are permitted to continue to mount, they will pose a threat to the quality of child care in Manitoba.

Recommendation 183

That maintenance grant funding be increased to adequately reflect real increased operating costs of child care centres, and that proportional increases be implemented for family day care homes.

The Task Force heard from many in the child care community who argued that reductions in child:staff ratios would have a very positive effect on the quality of child care. They suggested that ratios of 1 to 3 for infants, 1 to 6 for preschool and 1 to 10 for school age children would be more ideal.

We note that many centres have, at their own discretion, chosen to staff at lower ratios to provide enhanced quality and flexibility, but pressures from lack of funding have made it increasingly difficult for them to maintain this practice.

The Task Force is hesitant to recommend a regulatory reduction in child:staff ratios because of its dramatic impact on costs. We do, however, support the practice of increased staffing at the discretion of the centre.

Recommendation 184

That maintenance grant funding be increased to an adequate level to permit flexibility in staffing.

Throughout our hearings, the Task Force heard of the difficulties centres have in obtaining funds for capital projects or improvements.

Recommendation 185

That a Capital Project Fund be established, to which child care centres can apply for funding, on condition that the centres also seek funding from external sources.

The Task Force recognizes the additional costs incurred in providing child care in remote northern centres.

Recommendation 186

That existing "remoteness allowance" policies be applied to funding of northern child care centres in recognition of the higher costs of operation in remote locations, with the Child Day Care Office to monitor the use of this additional funding to ensure funds are being used as intended.

The Task Force believes that small rural and urban child care centres are a desirable part of the total child care system in Manitoba. Small centres, however, face problems of financial viability and present special management challenges. We believe the needs of smaller centres should be addressed in a manner that allows the Child Day Care Office to assess the management ability of the centre, community need and other relevant factors.

Recommendation 187

That a Small Centres Fund be established to which child care centres can apply for additional funding by showing documented need.

Care providers also questioned the logic of current lower levels of funding for school age children. They noted that, though child:staff ratios are higher for such programs, the additional food and program costs for older children offset the lower staff costs.

Recommendation 188

That maintenance grants for full time care of school age children be increased to the same level as grants for full time preschool children.

Formal audits are a requirement in the system, ensuring accountability for the use of government funds. Because these

audits are necessary, it follows that the costs of audit should be part of the base funding of child care centres.

Recommendation 189

That the audit grant given to child care centres be discontinued, and that maintenance grants be adjusted to include the costs of audit.

Throughout the course of our hearings, it became evident that there are vast differences in the property taxes that different child care centres must pay:

- some centres — especially those located in churches or community centres — pay no taxes
- some centres have had taxes waived by local governments
- some pay very high levels of property tax.

Since child care centres provide a valuable service to the community as a whole, the Task Force believes they should be uniformly exempted from property taxes.

Recommendation 190

That the Department of Community Services request the Department of Municipal Affairs to allow exemptions from property taxes for child care centres, similar to exemptions allowed for schools, churches and community centres.

The Funding of Salaries

The people who actually provide the care to the child are the key determinant of the quality of any child care system.

As stated earlier in this report, inadequate compensation and recognition of child care workers threatens Manitoba's ability to maintain and enhance the current high levels of quality in the child care system.

Clearly, there is a need to address this issue.

The Manitoba Child Care Association commissioned a report — the Mansis Report — to assess an appropriate salary level for child care workers. That report recommended that salaries at the Child Care Worker II classification should be set at $22,000 per year.

The Task Force agrees that current salary levels are inadequate and that they do not reflect the value of the services provided.

We do not believe that a system-wide salary level or set of salary scales should be set by the province. We endorse the autonomy of each child care centre, and support the right of the centre boards of directors to make the key management decisions as to salary levels, based on their unique knowledge of their own situation.

We also support the involvement of such professional organizations as Manitoba Child Care Association in promoting recognition of the value of the profession and in helping to determine appropriate salary levels.

Recommendation 191

That an assessment of the Mansis Report be undertaken immediately to confirm the validity of the report's conclusions.

Recommendation 192

That child care centre funding be increased to allow for significant increases in salaries with the Mansis report, if validated, to be used as a basis.

Recommendation 193

That the province develop a plan to implement funding for salary adjustments within three months of the beginning of the 1989-90 fiscal year.

The Task Force recognizes that the potential increase in costs related to salary adjustments is substantial and that this may preclude establishing the full increase immediately.

Recommendation 194

That the increase in salary support be phased in over a maximum three year period.

Members of the Task Force also questioned the continued usefulness of Salary Enhancement Grants as the mechanism for funding salary levels in the not-for-profit sector.

While there may have been validity initially in this method of targeting funds to improve salaries, the reality is that staff costs are an integral and significant component in the overall financial picture of child care centre. As such, the Task Force believes that it is more appropriate to fund for salaries in the same manner as funding for other financial obligations of a child care centre.

Recommendation 195

That the system of salary enhancement grants for the not-for-profit sector be eliminated over the next three years, with finding for child care workers salaries being provided through appropriate increases in maintenance grants.

There is also a need to address the issue of employment benefits for child care workers, including pensions and a range of other benefits and employment policies.

The Task Force believes that benefit needs are best addressed by individual centres who can determine the benefits best suited to their employees. This is another area in which professional associations can play a major support and development role.

Recommendation 196

That child care centres be encouraged to provide benefit packages to suit the needs of the individual centre's employees.

Recommendation 197

That child care centres implement personnel policies to meet the needs of the individual centre.

The Task Force recognizes the special problems northern and remote centres have in attracting and keeping qualified child care workers.

Recommendation 198

That remote northern centres be allowed increased funding to enable them to incorporate remoteness allowance into staff salaries, and that the Child Day Care Office monitor the use of such additional funding to ensure funds are being used as intended.

The Debate About Funding of Commercial Child Care

At present, some 10% of the licensed child care spaces in Manitoba are provided by commercial child care programs. The Task Force, like the child care community in general, is not unanimous with respect to commercial child care programs. It is useful to provide a brief overview of the nature of the disagreement that exists within the child care community nationwide.

On the one hand, there is a level of philosophical discomfort at the idea of human services being provided by for-profit enterprises. Those who hold to this view are concerned that:

- the profit motive will take precedence over the delivery of quality care to children
- in order to earn profits in a service which is not funded, commercial operations will tend to cut corners and pay lower salaries; since adequate salaries for care providers are seen as a key determiner of quality in child care, it is assumed that this will lead to inferior quality in commercial programs
- commercial care programs are seen as less responsive to the community and to cultural or other values
- the provision of government support for commercial child care programs will increase the attractiveness of investments in such programs, drawing in business people whose primary goal is to earn profits, rather than provide quality care, leading to possible increases in the proportion of commercial spaces in the system as a whole; this is seen as undesirable
- if lack of government support for commercial child care programs means these programs must charge families higher fees, this is not unfair because all families have equal access to the funded, not-for-profit sector.

This view is held most strongly within parts of the service provider community. **It is based on a fundamental philosophical objection to commercial provision of human services.**

The alternative view is that:

- the key issue is not ownership of a program, but the quality of the care it provides: if a child care program meets the standards required for licensing and delivers care of a quality acceptable to parents and the government, it is irrelevant whether it is commercial or not-for-profit

- there is no evidence that commercial child care programs provide poorer quality service than any other program; any program that fails to meet quality standards — be it commercial or not-for-profit — should have its license revoked
- parents are and should be the final judges: if they choose to enter into care arrangements with a commercial provider, that is and should be their right
- a failure to provide equivalent financial support to licensed commercial child care programs is a discrimination against the families whose children receive care in those programs: without equivalent financial support, the only way the commercial programs can provide equivalent service is by charging families higher fees
- to talk of parents' "choosing" to pay higher fees is academic given the shortage of spaces in the child care system.

This view is held by commercial care providers. The Task Force also heard from a number of parents who expressed satisfaction with the quality of service they received from commercial child care programs.

The Task Force View of the Debate

The Task Force is unable to reach an overall consensus on the issue of funding child care provided by commercial child operators.

This is not surprising. The Task Force includes representation from all parts of the child care community, and the community itself has not yet resolved this issue.

The major player in the child care system in Manitoba is and should remain the not-for-profit sector, and the role of the not-for-profit sector should be strengthened. The majority of government funding dollars must remain with the not-for-profit sector.

Our mandate, however, is to make practical recommendations for improvements in the child care system that exists to serve Manitoba families. That system includes 1,251 licensed spaces provided by commercial child care programs.

Most members of the Task Force would much prefer a system in which there were no government financial support to commercial care providers, and would hold that as a long term goal. To reach this goal, government must work in active partnership with the not-for-profit child care community across the province.

At the present time in Manitoba, however, we face a severe shortage of licensed child care spaces. Our funding recommendations must reflect those realities.

Funding Recommendations: Commercial Centres

The key factors that determine the quality of child care programs are parental involvement and the stable presence of trained and dedicated child care workers.

The quality of the child care system as a whole is at risk because of the inadequate salaries that care providers have earned. At the present time, salaries in the commercial sector tend to be lower than those paid in the not-for-profit sector.

Although commercial operators point to the fact that not-for-profit centres receive salary enhancement grants that are not paid to commercial programs, the Task Force notes that this differential in salaries existed even before the salary enhancement grant was instituted.

If commercial child care centres are to provide services of comparable quality to that provided by not-for-profit centres, the Task Force believes that they must pay salaries comparable with those elsewhere in the system. In addition, we believe that the quality of care provided by these centres would benefit from enhanced emphasis on training and staff development.

Without government assistance, the only way that salaries for child care workers in commercial centres can be raised is through significant increases in the fees charged to parents. That would work directly counter to the interests of families whose children receive care in commercial centres and could make it impossible for them to afford the services. **Because of the overall shortage of available licensed spaces, these families would not have the realistic option of receiving service at lower costs in the not-for-profit sector.**

For these reasons, all Task Force members were prepared to consider recommending the granting of government monies for salary enhancement in the commercial sector. There were, however, significant concerns that had to be addressed in our discussions.

The first relates to the uses to which these funds would be put. Anytime public monies are granted to a commercial enterprise, there must be clear and stringent accountability to ensure that the funds are used for the purpose intended.

In this case, the purpose of the grant would be to increase the salaries paid to child care workers over and above the levels that they would otherwise be able to receive. It is not to reduce centre expenses or increase centre profits by offsetting current or future employer salary payments to these staff.

In addition, the Task Force believes that **salary enhancement is only one part of an appropriate program to ensure program quality** through the attraction and retention of trained and dedicated child care workers. We believe an appropriate program must also include commitments to ongoing training and staff development.

We believe that the granting of public funds to support services provided by commercial child care programs should also involve an obligation for these centres to improve the overall quality of the service they provide. **The goal is not simply higher salaries: it is the assurance of an enhanced quality of care.**

The Task Force has no concern for the welfare of the corporations who provide this service on a commercial basis: they are businesses and should be prepared to deal with the vagaries of the marketplace.

We are concerned, however, with the quality of the care that these organizations are able to provide to Manitoba children.

For that reason, the Task Force makes the following conditional recommendation:

Recommendation 199

That all existing licensed spaces in commercial centres in Manitoba be eligible for salary enhancement support at the level of the current salary enhancement grants — $3,300 per year per qualified staff member, on condition that:

- ***the salary enhancement grants to commercial centres be so designed as to ensure that all of the monies go to increase the salaries paid to child care workers in those centres, and that these monies do not replace normal employer salary payments, and that the total of employer and government contributions result in salary levels comparable to those paid in the funded system as a whole in each geographic region of the province; and***
- ***in order to qualify for such grants, commercial centres be required to submit to an annual payroll audit to demonstrate that these monies are being properly used and appropriate salary levels are being paid***
- ***in order to qualify for such grants, commercial centres be required to initiate ongoing programs of staff training and development, and to provide regular reports on these programs to the Child Day Care Office; and***
- ***in order to qualify for such grants, commercial centres be required to file program review and enhancement plans with the Child Day Care Office, including strategies for enhancing parental involvement in the care programs, and that their compliance with these plans be closely monitored by the Child Day Care Office.***

In addition to salary enhancement grants, designated not-for-profit child care centres receive maintenance and start-up grants to defray ongoing operating and initial start-up costs. It is the view of the Task Force that these costs are most properly seen as legitimate overheads within commercial enterprises, and can be recovered in the fees charged to parents who select this kind of service.

Recommendation 200

That existing commercial child care spaces <u>not</u> include provision of start-up or maintenance grants.

The members of the Task Force do not believe that the conditions we are recommending for the granting of salary enhancement support to commercial centres are particularly onerous nor that good commercial child care programs will object to them or have any difficulty in satisfying the requirements.

We believe similar requirements could usefully be incorporated into efforts to enhance quality in the system as a whole.

We do, however, believe that these conditions are especially necessary to achieve appropriate accountability for public monies granted to commercial enterprises. These positive requirements, combined with continuing effective monitoring and enforcement, can serve to enhance quality in this sector of the child care system.

Further, we believe that the provision of public monies to support care provided by commercial centres is not desirable as a permanent feature of the child care system in Manitoba.

At present, because of the overall shortage of licensed spaces, families may be using commercial care because that is the only care available to them; therefore, we are recommending that support be provided now.

The longer term goal should be to expand the total number of spaces in the system to meet demand so that those using commercial services are clearly doing so as a matter of parental choice. At that point, where all families have realistic access to not-for-profit services, the justification for providing this support to commercial services should be re-evaluated. In light of these considerations, the policy of providing public support to commercial child care programs should be reviewed in 24 months.

Meeting the Need for Subsidized Spaces

The only public money that currently flows to commercial and non-funded not-for-profit child care centres or family day care homes comes in the form of subsidies to qualified parents. At present, these centres are limited to a maximum of 25% of their licensed spaces being filled by subsidized children.

The subsidy paid to these centres does not currently reflect the full "cost of service" as calculated by the government. Instead, the subsidy payment is equal to the full cost minus the amount of the maintenance grant paid to not-for-profit centres.

If our recommendations are followed and all existing not-for-profit spaces are designated, these programs will no longer be limited to 25% subsidized spaces and will begin to receive the maintenance grant so that, in total, they will receive amounts equal to the full cost of service in respect of subsidized children.

The commercial centres do not and, if our recommendations are followed, will not receive the maintenance grant.

There are currently waiting lists of families who need child care services and who qualify for full or partial subsidy. The limits on numbers of subsidized spaces that have been permitted in non-designated programs, and the less than full cost of service payments made to these programs for subsidized children, have added to that problem.

The Task Force believes it is undesirable for any child care program to include only subsidized or only unsubsidized children. On the longer term, as the system expands and matures, we would hope that there would be standards established to ensure that, wherever practical, there is a mix of children in all programs.

There is an urgent need now, however, for subsidized child care spaces.

Recommendation 201

That commercial child care centres continue to be permitted to accept subsidized children up to a maximum of 25% of their licensed spaces, and that this limit should be reviewed annually and lowered when and as there are enough subsidized spaces available in the system as a whole to meet the need.

Recommendation 202

That the sudsidy paid to commercial centres should be increased to reflect the full cost of service as calculated under the provincial formula, less salary enhancement grants received by the centre, rather than being reduced as it is now by an amount equal to the maintenance grant paid to not-for-profit centres.

Future Expansion of the Commercial Sector

There are two schools of thought about expansion in the commercial sector. As noted above, many in the child care community are opposed to this in principle.

In Manitoba today, however, there is an urgent need for more child care spaces. The commercial sector can help to meet that need.

Because of the unresolved debate that exists around the desirability of government funded commercial involvement in this service, however, we believe **it best if the current nature of the system and current proportions of commercial and not-for-profit programs be maintained.**

Recommendation 203

That funding of new commercial centres and additional spaces in existing commercial programs be permitted only in proportion (as it is now, i.e. 10%) to the overall expansion of the Manitoba child care system, with new spaces being entitled to salary support funding, and with the current 25% limitation on subsidized spaces being maintained. This policy may be reviewed at such time as the current debate about commercial care is resolved within the child care community.

Support For Families

Manitoba's evolving child care system provides a range of essential supports for Manitoba families, but many who appeared before the Task Force emphasized that families have a variety of needs that are affected by government policies and programs.

Many parents who have chosen to stay at home to raise their children reported concerns regarding inequities in a system which appears to benefit the parent who works outside the home.

The Task force supports these concerns and suggests the following measures directed to assist parents who remain at home:

- support the concept of permitting stay at home parents to participate in the Canada Pension Plan
- support for resource centres that parents and children can use
- support for the development of part time, respite and occasional care
- support for nursery schools
- support for measures to make it possible for parents who choose to stay at home to do so
- ensuring that many of the resources recommended in this report be made available to parents
- support for families of children with special needs who are at home
- support for tax measures that recognize the position of parents who stay in the home.

While these matters fall outside the formal mandate given us by the government, the Members of the Child Care Task Force believe that they are all legitimate and important areas of concern for government and the community at large, and that they all bear on the quality of the total care and developmental experience Manitoba children can have.

We know that many of these matters have been addressed in a variety of forums, including the Women's Initiative, but we believe it is important that all government activities relating to families be constantly reviewed and evaluated.

We therefore make the following recommendation.

Recommendation 204

That the government undertake an interdepartmental review of all programs and policies bearing on children and families to ensure that, in total, they are providing the greatest possible level of support for families and family life in Manitoba.

Priorities

The members of the Task Force are very aware that the financial implications of all the recommendations put forth in this report are immense.

While we emphasize that we feel all of the recommendations are important, we acknowledge a responsibility to children, parents, the child care community and the government to identify those issues and concerns that appear to us to demand action most urgently.

We have found it virtually impossible to priorize the key concerns on a "one, two, three..." basis, as the needs relate very closely to one another. We feel that, in keeping with our stated beliefs in quality and accessibility, it is most urgent that salaries, training opportunities, adequate financial support for the existing system and provision of additional spaces be addressed.

The need for new spaces has been clearly identified, but to focus all resources in this area would be to seriously jeopardize the quality of the whole child care system.

Expanded spaces in child care centres are dependent upon trained and dedicated child care workers; unless training becomes more accessible and salaries are increased to attract more people into the field, there will not be enough child care workers even to meet demands within the existing system.

Quality care is also threatened by a shortage of maintenance support funding to existing child care programs, and the Task Force believes that expansion of an underfunded system would be irresponsible.

Thus, it is evident to the Task Force that the future strategy for the child care system must be a combination of expansion of spaces and support to ensure quality care in both existing and new spaces.

While we emphasize the concerns noted above, we would also like to point out the unique opportunity Manitoba has today to encourage and assist the development of a system of child care for Aboriginal children. Because the child care system is still at an early stage in its evolution, the Aboriginal community feels this is an opportune time to promote the parallel growth of a system to meet their particular cultural needs.

The Task Force endorses this concept, and urges the Aboriginal community, the government and the child care community to make Manitoba a leader in the development of this innovative child care program.